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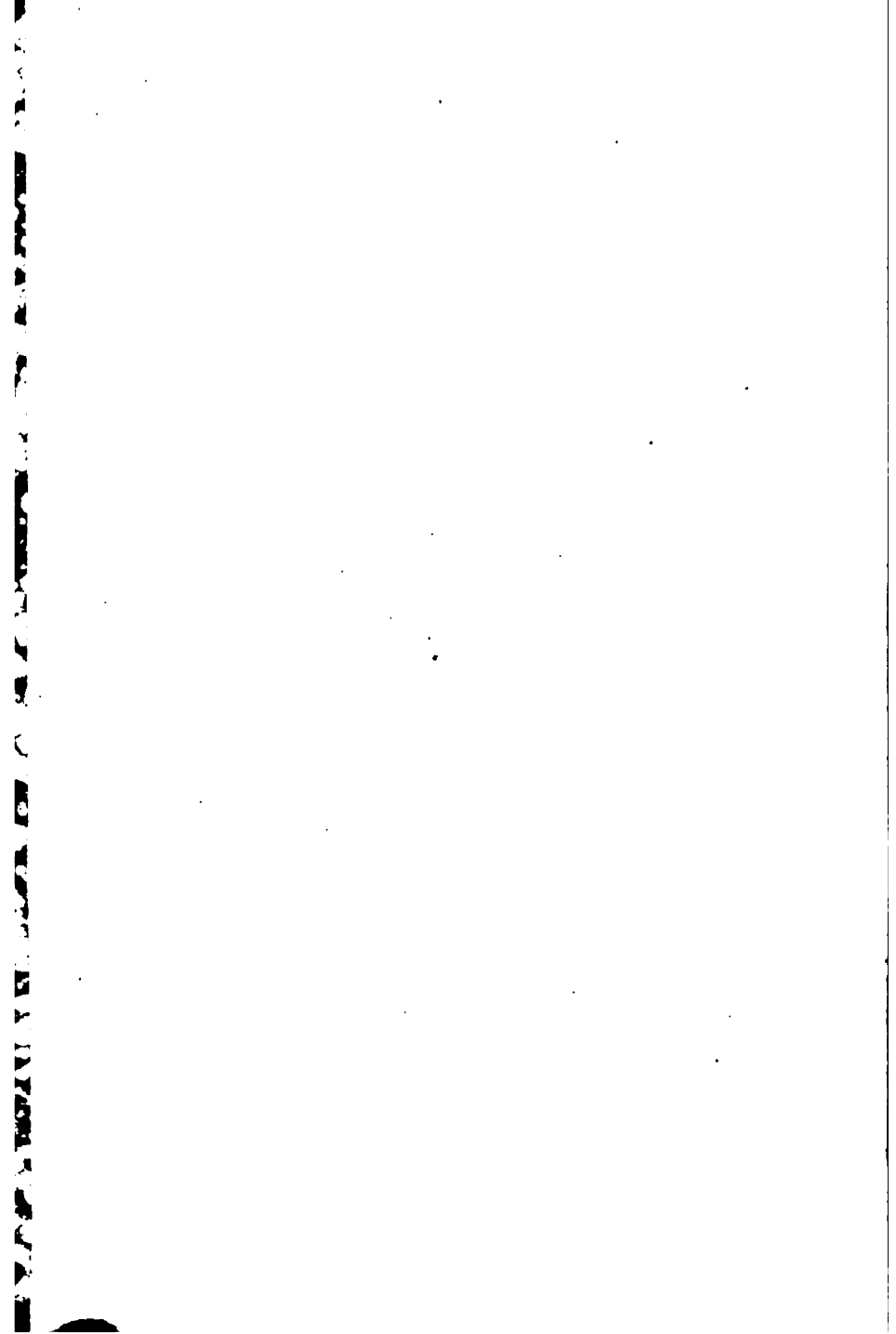
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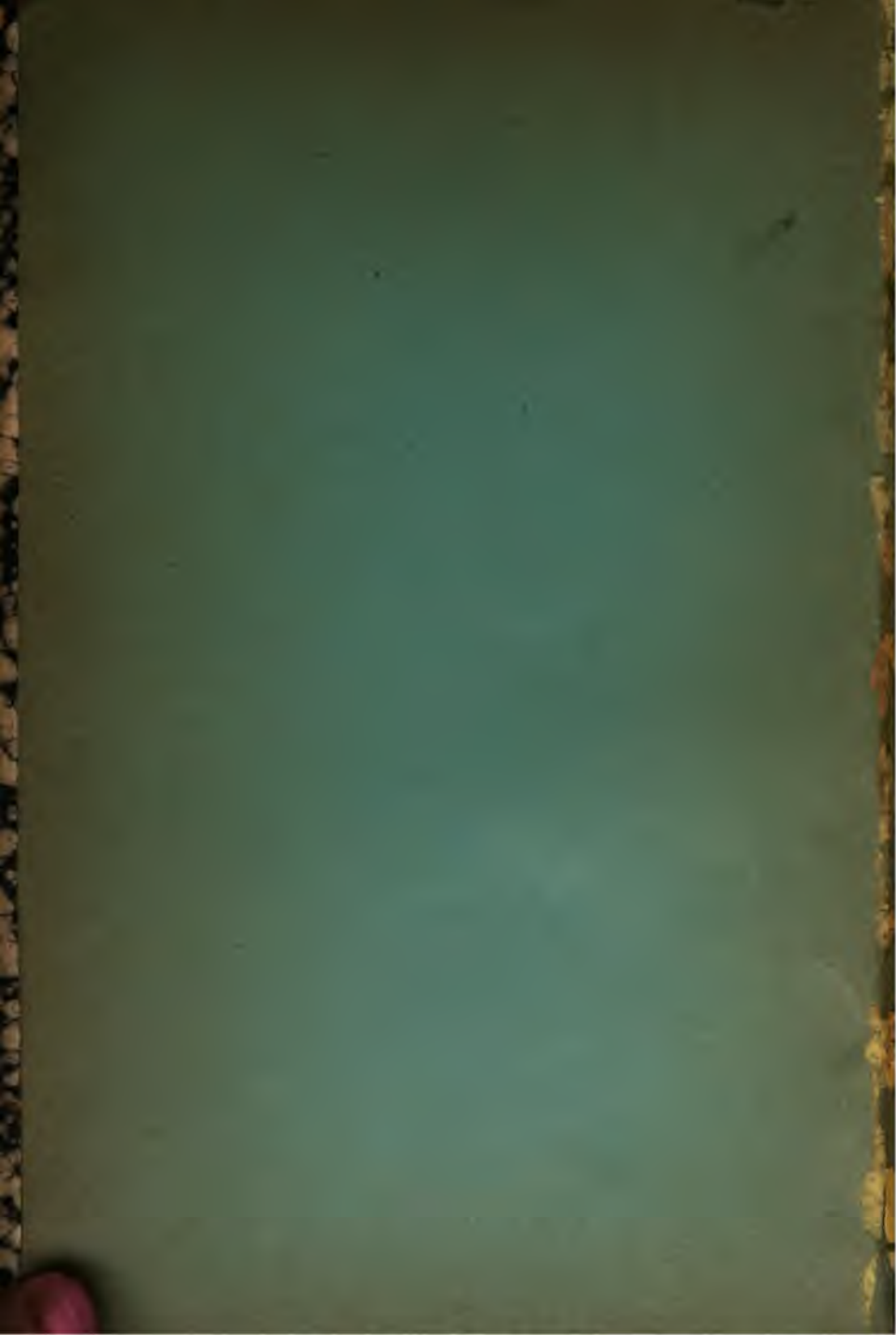


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# The Heritage of the Kurts

A Novel

L O N D O N

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1892

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# THE HERITAGE OF THE KURTS

BY

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN [Det flager i Byen og  
paa Havnen]

BY

CECIL FAIRFAX



LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1892

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE greatest of Norwegian novelists was christened Björnsterne Martinius Björnson, but he has never used the second of these names. He was born on the 8th of December 1832, at Kvikne in Österdalen, a parish of which his father had the year before been appointed priest. According to a statement in one of his own poems, "our race was once the foremost in the land," but the family name was Ske in the eighteenth century, and was changed to Björnson by the novelist's father; it does not seem certain that the Skes were ever very illustrious or very prominent. Björnsterne Björnson was the eldest son of Peder Björnson and Inger Elise Nordraak, who were married in 1831. In the little story called *Blakken* ("The Dun"), the novelist has described the solitary life which he led in the bleak parsonage high up in a ravine of the hills. When he was six years old, his father was transferred to Næset, in the Romsdal, one of the loveliest parishes in Norway, where the influences of natural beauty and a full peasant society instantly began to mould the child's poetic sensations. He describes how he

would stand in the parsonage garden of a summer evening, and watch the sunset colours on the hills opposite and on the fjord below, until he would burst into tears with an emotion to which he could give no name.

At the grammar school of Molde, to which he was sent in his eleventh year, Björnson was an active, tiresome, and industrious boy, in whom, about four years later, a feeling for literature was suddenly awakened by the reading of Wergeland's poem, *The English Pilot*. At seventeen he was sent to a high school at Christiania, where the poet A. O. Vinje was one of his school-fellows, and for two years his close daily companion. The theories which this singular young man already entertained with regard to the freshening and "Norsking" of the Danish language as employed by Norwegian writers, were not without their direct influence on Björnson's after-practice, although he never pushed these views to Vinje's extreme. In 1852 Björnson entered the University of Christiania. Before this, however, he had written, and had submitted to the management of the metropolitan theatre, a drama called *Valborg*; it was accepted, and in consequence the author was admitted free to the performances. By this unconscious education his taste became so far refined, that when his own piece came up for rehearsal he was disgusted with its imperfections, and withdrew it. This, and two other dramas of his early student-years, have never been printed. In 1854 he began to support himself by journalism in the capital. His early career was one of struggle, not only against privation and disappointment, but against a paralysing conviction of his own dulness and want of talent. At length, in his twenty-fourth year, having attended a student celebration at Upsala in Sweden, in the capacity of a newspaper correspondent,

and having been greatly roused by the enthusiasm of his companions, he "resolved," as he tells us in one of his autobiographical sketches, "to become a poet." He wrote a heroic drama in one act, *Mellem Slagene* ("Between the Battles"), in a fortnight, and started off, with the manuscript in his pocket, to try his luck in Copenhagen.

The year 1857 was one of great literary activity for Björnson. *Mellem Slagene*, though not accepted in Copenhagen, was played with success at Christiania in October, and published in book-form at Christmas of the same year. In 1856 the young author had become editor of a small illustrated weekly, in which, after his return to Norway, he began to produce a series of short prose stories. These were followed, in the summer of 1857, by a novel, called after its heroine, *Synnöve Solbakken*, which came out in book-form in September, and is therefore Björnson's earliest published work. This is a tale of unprecedented charm and freshness, an exceedingly naïve study of peasant life in the Norwegian mountains. Norse literature was, at the moment of this publication, suffering from an absolute dearth of new talent, and this little novel, with all its faults of composition, struck so pure and fresh a note, that it was received with delighted enthusiasm in all parts of the country; four or five translations of *Synnöve Solbakken* exist in the English language.

Björnson was now suddenly grown famous, and the great success of his novel led him to write a not less beautiful, but perhaps a stronger, story in the same style, *Arne*, in 1858. Of this also many English versions have been made. Meanwhile, in December 1857, at the invitation of Ole Bull, Björnson proceeded to Bergen to be "artistic manager" of the theatre there; he held this position for two years, combining with it considerable journalistic activity, and begin

ning to be appreciated as a singularly effective popular lecturer. Soon after his arrival in Bergen he produced a short tragedy, called *Halte Hulda* ("Limping Hulda"), which he had written during his stay in Copenhagen. This is the affecting story of a lame girl's hopeless passion for an active and ambitious man. Björnson's last business in Bergen was to publish a volume of *Smaastykker* ("Miscellanies"), consisting of tales and dramatic sketches, written during the five previous years. Among the stories thus published, one, *En glad Gut* ("A Happy Boy"), has been regarded as Björnson's most perfect essay in the line of peasant-romance, and has been translated into almost every European language.

In May 1860, abandoning Norway, Björnson proceeded with his family to Copenhagen; securing from the Government of his country at the close of the year a small travelling stipend, he passed to Italy, where he remained, chiefly in Rome, until May 1862. It was in Rome that he wrote the tragedy of *Kong Sverre*, published in Copenhagen in 1861, and performed at the Norse Theatre in Christiania later in the same season. In this graceful saga-drama, the King Sverre, who took an incidental part in *Mellem Slagene*, forms the central figure; but much of the interest gathers around the bishop, Nicolaus, one of Björnson's most skilful pieces of figure-painting. The masterly trilogy called *Sigurd Slembe*, a drama on a much broader scale than any of its author's previous works, closes, in 1862, the series of Björnson's saga-plays. It was written in the Tyrol, during the poet's leisurely return journey. In the spring of 1863 he was once more in Norway, writing a tragedy on *Mary Stuart in Scotland*, which was published the following season.

The next ten years were not marked by any great events

in the life of the Norwegian poet. He produced in 1865 a very successful little social comedy, *De Nygifte* ("The Newly Married Couple"); in 1868, another pastoral novelette, *Fiskerjenten* ("The Fisher Maiden"); in 1870, a collection of *Digte og Sange* ("Poems and Songs"); and in the same year a sort of fragmentary epic of heroic Norse life, very obscure in style, and difficult in language, with occasional passages of singular beauty, called *Arnliot Gelline*.

Björnson had now become, in the absence of Ibsen, unquestionably the principal literary figure in Norway, and an object of enthusiasm and hatred to rival parties. I may be, perhaps, permitted to recall my own slight recollection of him at this time. In the summer of 1872, I carried to Björnson a letter of introduction from Hans Christian Andersen. I found him living in a small house in Munke-damsveien, a long lane in one of the suburbs of Christiania. In a pretty little room, with trellised windows, a large and even burly man, who was sitting astride a small sofa, rose vehemently to receive me. His long limbs, his athletic frame, and especially his remarkably forcible face, surrounded by a mane of beautiful wavy brown hair, and illuminated by full blue eyes behind flashing spectacles, gave an instant impression of the poet's physical vigour. He was truculently cordial, and raised his ringing tones in civil conversation. Resuming his singular attitude astride the sofa, he entered affably into a loud torrent of talk, lolling back, shaking his great head, suddenly bringing himself up into a sitting posture to shout out, with a palm pressed on either knee, some question or statement. His full and finely modulated voice, with his clear enunciation, greatly aided his slightly terrified visitor in appreciating his remarks, but he spoke with great rapidity, and it strained the attention of



a foreigner to follow his somewhat florid volubility. It has not been my privilege to see Mr. Björnson save on that solitary occasion twenty years ago, but the memory of his heroic presence, abounding vitality, and cordial fierceness is as vivid as though I had visited him yesterday.

A short tale, the last to be composed in his early peasant manner, called *Brude-Slaatten* ("The Bridal March"), 1873, was Björnson's only contribution to fiction during these years. In 1871 he had begun to undertake those lecturing tours, which he afterwards extended to Sweden and to America. These occupied a great part of his leisure, and almost brought his literary production to a standstill, but they were eminently successful. In 1874 he bought the estate, above the town of Lillehammer, called Aulestad, in Gausdal, which he still inhabits during the greater part of the year. Of this house and of the wholesome existence of its owner, Mr. H. L. Brækstad gave a very pleasant account in the *Century Magazine* for 1886. Aulestad is a modified farmhouse, surrounded by balconies and verandahs, and painted bright white like a Swiss villa. Here the poet takes his share in the life of the township—active, beneficent, eccentric, a sort of Golden Farmer in this laughing valley among the dark pine-plumaged mountains. His restless temperament, however, forbids him to settle all the year round in the pastoral serenity of Aulestad. He needs the excitement of men and towns, and he has been a constant partial exile from his country.

In 1878 he spent some time in Paris, and he stayed through the autumn and winter of 1879 at Meiningen, as the guest of the Grand Duke. In the latter year he was engaged in a mysterious sort of dispute with the King of Sweden, the details of which, as recounted by the newspapers

throughout Europe, were mainly fabulous, and the source of great annoyance to the Norwegian poet. From 1882 until very lately Björnson resided for several months of each year in Paris, but he has now once more become a regular resident of Norway.

To return to the chronicle of his literary productions. In 1875 Björnson appeared as the author of two satirical comedies, or social dramas, which curiously foreshadowed the series of works in the same form which Ibsen was already contemplating. The first of these, *Redaktören* ("The Editor"), was a political pamphlet in four acts, severely dealing with a certain type of smart and unscrupulous "society" journalist. Björnson was accused of intentionally drawing the portrait of one of the leaders of the Christiania Tory press, and his play was bitterly attacked. Two months later, another social drama, *En Fallit* ("A Bankruptcy"), followed, and enjoyed a great success on the boards; it had already been acted at Stockholm, in a Swedish translation. This has proved the most lastingly popular of all Björnson's plays, especially in Germany and Russia, where it is in the repertory of every provincial theatre. It has been played in London, but without success, and the taste of it, indeed, is strictly German. It deals, in an interesting and modern manner, with the ruin of a speculative house of business at the approach of a crisis on the money market, and with the ethical questions raised by the conduct of the persons mainly involved. Another play of this period is *Kongen* ("The King"), 1877, of a polemical character; the hero is a monarch who chooses to abdicate in favour of a republic. This drama was violently attacked in the Conservative press, being looked upon as a manifestation of enmity to the national throne, and a sign that the poet was being driven further and further

into opposition to the existing Sovereign of Sweden and Norway. In a later edition Björnson modified something, and explained his position in a dignified apology.

When Björnson, in this same year 1877, reappeared as a novelist, a great change in his manner was discernible. In *Magnhild*, the exquisite purity and simplicity of style which marked his early peasant-novelettes had disappeared; this book was more real, perhaps, but it was more turbulent and more experimental than the author's old mountain romances. Björnson had been touched by the "novel of experience," and had been troubled by it. The book was a study of the effect of an unsympathetic marriage on the character of an unconventional woman. But it was not executed with a very sure hand, nor was *Kaptejn Mansana* ("Captain Mansana")—an episode of the Italian war, published in 1879—entirely worthy of Björnson's reputation. He returned once more to prose drama, and in *Leonarda*, 1879, an attack on the bigotry and conventionality of the Norwegian society of to-day, produced a dramatic experiment which obviously owed something of its form to Ibsen's then recent *A Doll's House*. This was not in all respects a successfully constructed piece, but it contains one delightful character, the Grandmother, who, in the breadth of thought of her youngest relations, breathes once more the intellectual atmosphere of her own emancipated girlhood. Another curious and speculative drama of this same year was *Det Ny System* ("The New System," or "Le Nouveau Jeu," perhaps), a satirical comedy of business-life, which in some respects recalls Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*. Two other plays, both of 1883, closed for the present the roll of Björnson's dramatic writings. Of these the first, *En Hanske* ("A Gauntlet"), is a bold attempt to solve one of the oldest problems of human ethics—why it is,

namely, that though man and woman both may sin, it is woman only who must suffer in the eyes of the world. Björnson has the courage to suggest that purity of pre-marital life should be as rigorously demanded of a bridegroom as of a bride, and his heroine, Svava, breaks off her engagement with the hero because the gauntlet she has thrown down in this respect cannot be picked up and fought for. Whatever may be thought of this central idea, there is no question that *En Hanske* is one of the cleverest of Björnson's dramas, if it be not, indeed, that in which he shows most dramatic instinct and the liveliest play of dialogue. *Over Ævne* ("Out of Reach") is a singular dramatic fragment, dealing with life in the extreme north of Norway, where the solitude and the extraordinary phenonema of Nature tend to the encouragement of mystical and pietistic habits of thought. There is a picturesque charm about this curious little play, which is nevertheless marred by its obscurity.

During the last nine years, greatly occupied as he has been by political and social problems in actual life, Björnson has published but little. He has, however, written two long novels, the most important on which he has ever been engaged. Of these, one is the book which is here for the first time presented to the English public; it was published in 1884, and its name in the original is *Det flager i Byen og paa Havnen* ("Flags are Flying in Town and Harbour"), a title for which we have ventured to substitute, as more directly descriptive, *The Heritage of the Kurts*. The other novel is *Paa Guds Veje* ("In God's Way"), 1889, a translation of which formed the opening volume of the present series. The profound originality and freshness of that remarkable book were widely appreciated in this country, and we may perhaps record the curious fact that the extra-

ordinary success of the book in England, in 1890, revived and vastly encouraged the sale of the original in Scandinavia. It is hoped that *The Heritage of the Kurts*, which is in many ways a closely parallel production, may enjoy no less warm a welcome from its English readers. Translator, editor, and publisher alike desire to express their debt to Mr. C. F. Keary, whose knowledge of Norwegian matters is so widely recognised, for the help he has given in revising the translation throughout, and in particular for his advice in regard to the diction of the first section of the book, which, in the original, is an extremely clever *pastiche* of early eighteenth-century Danish.

EDMUND GOSSE.

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I

FROM AN OLD MANUSCRIPT

A





## FROM AN OLD MANUSCRIPT

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### CHAPTER I.

#### "THE ESTATE" AND THOSE WHO LIVED THERE.

"THE ESTATE" had probably been acquired by the strong hand, as indeed most domains have been in all countries and at all times ; but what proportion forced marriages and fair bargains bore to actual guile, fraud, and such base means, we can no longer determine.

Two hundred years ago it was an immense possession, the home farm stood then as now on the woody mountain slopes overlooking the town, the whole of which can be seen from there ; both the old town on this side of the harbour, and the new one out by the point. This point shelters the harbour from the sea, but is not itself absolutely exposed to it, for islands and skerries lie beyond it, and between them the two entrances, the North and West Sounds. All this is to be seen from "The Estate," and far out to sea as well.

Farther away to the right is the river between whose clayey banks the foaming mass pours down into the harbour. At one time this river and all the works at its mouth belonged to "The Estate," as well as the site of the town, the islands, and the coast on either side ; and farther on, the lower lands and woods down to the channel of the river. Such was "The Estate" two hundred years ago.

Its principal building is a large brick house from which rises a squat clumsy tower ; it has a long wing on the right hand, but curiously enough none on the left ; behind are a

number of old stone buildings serving as stables, cow-houses, and the like, besides servants' quarters.

The great stairway up to the house, a perfect mountain of stone slabs, for it is of immense size, is of semicircular form, having steps round the whole circuit. From it a noble avenue leads down to the town market-place, and on each side of it runs a stone park-wall which almost reaches as far as the market; on the other sides of both the walls lies the garden, which is cut in two by the avenue. Open fields lie on both sides and likewise between the gardens and the town.

Above the houses, out towards the mountain, is a wood of deciduous trees; although the fir-trees have again begun their silent advance against them, for at one time they had the hill to themselves.

Who laid out these pleasure-grounds, who built this enormous mansion? you say to yourself on first seeing the house and gardens of "The Estate."

It was more than two hundred years ago, about 1660, that a German skipper, who called himself Kurt (spelt at that time Curt), first brought his vessel into the harbour in order to have her re-rigged and painted, most probably to prevent her from being recognised. We now know that he had then long been exiled from his native country on account of some deed of violence which he had committed. He was of a princely German family which still bears an honoured name which does not require to be mentioned here—he was known only by his Christian name of Curt.

He had not been there long before he began to pay his court to the daughter and heir of Claus Mathiassön, the owner of "The Estate," paying no heed to what the neighbours thought of it.

"It was the noble maid Ingeborg Clausdotter." . . . From this point I follow verbatim a manuscript description pertaining to the town, and more especially to "The Estate," which was written at the beginning of the last century by an old parish clerk and choir-master of Saint Mary in that place. . . .

She would hide herself away up in the Cock Loft, down in the Cellar, in Byre or stable; she would fly you to wood or field whenever the swaggering foreigner, skipper Curt, came a Wooing, for then he was commonly in liquor.

Worshipful Master Claus Mathiassön might bring him Ale from his cellar, and set before him such things as he desired; the next moment had Curt half slain him because Master Claus could not bring his fair daughter to speak with him; and moreover he drove away every living person from the homestead. He swore also to cut down any man who should dare to wish to take her to wife: he would wring his neck, said he, and all his belongings, and hers as well if she should ever belong to another.

And there was Hans Fürst in the Market Place hard by the Church of St. Mary. When it was said that he too was a Wooer, went Curt to him on Good Friday morning as Hans still lay abed, and beat him so sore with a stout cudgel that for long after he was but broken bones. Hans Fürst was afraid to bide in the town whenever skipper Curt came in with his Ships, which from that time happened often enough; and it fell in likewise with the Bailiff, Master Bernhard von Klüwer, who would fain have brought him to reason. Curt defied him and hauled his ships before the Bailiff's house; two ships he had then, and Cannon and his Company, and the Bailiff dared no more go out alone, and did not dare to discharge his office, but departed, nor did he return. So that full a year passed ere his office was again filled; when it was, 'twas a German who got it who was of a Mind with Curt in all things; and the old Bailiff, he obtained office in another place.

'Twas commonly spoken of Curt that he had stole his first ship in the North Sea; later he had two ships, and folk held it for certain that the second was stolen also, but his people were silent concerning it, and naught was done in the Matter. Now it was in the following way that he got the maid. There came a Clerk from his Excellence the Stadtholder Ulrich, Frederick Güldenlöve, with Commands from the High and Mighty Prince, King Frederick 3rd, now of blessed memory, to the worshipful Claus Mathiassön of "The Estate," and to the good men and true of the Town, Counsellors, and Burgesses, that they must so deal for skipper Curt who was of a noble German Family, that he should have the high-born Maid Ingeborg Clausdotter to wife, promising them his royal favour and especial grace, which skipper Curt without hesitation agreed to; so the King's Will was done. The Clerk was come in Sören

Rasmussen's sloop from Oslo; he also was a German, and spoke Danish but ill; he demanded much service, and that he got, for he was lodged at the Council House, and was bidden, when the wedding should be over, to condescend to put up with the same at the houses of sundry of the burgesses.

The wedding was celebrated with grandeur, but many a tear shed Mistress Ingeborg as did Claus Mathiassön, who knew that now his days of happiness were past.

But it so chanced that at the wedding, Master Curt, being in liquor, fell upon the clerk with thrust and blow and Drove him from the board, for he swore he was not fit to sit at meat with the quality and their women folk, for he was no clerk of the Stadtholder, but a cursed vagabond Barber who had been a wood cutter to his brother-in-law in Pommerania. So the barber fled over to the point and thence to the North Holm, from there he hailed a passing ship and was taken on board of her.

Therewith ended the wedding feast, but this mattered little to Curt, for he had won his bride.

Now this is how it fell out; skipper Curt had been to Oslo and there had met a Holsteiner, Georg von Bregentvedt; the same was a captain and gave the Stadtholder aid in warlike enterprise, but Georg von Bregentvedt and Curt had been known to each other in Germany, and this Georg was a rare knave, full of merry conceits, and he helped Curt with this trick, but they got the barber to bring it to pass.

Old Claus Mathiassön went straightway to Copenhagen to make complaint before the king, and three times had he *audience*, and each time was the king Mightily enraged, but may well have forgotten it again by reason of other matters, for Curt had countrymen at Court. In the meantime was the money spent with which Claus Mathiassön had provided himself, and Curt had seized "The Estate," and refused to send him more, likewise he threatened all those who would have been true to him; and as Claus Mathiassön at the same time got a letter from his daughter, sent secretly by the skipper of a sloop, saying that she was now with child, but that Curt went after other women on "The Estate," and in the town; so thought Claus Mathiassön that no good could come from his going home. And no man asked for him from that time. Claus Mathiassön was of Danish blood, and a good man was he.

Now "The Estate" at this time was a vast place of much grandeur, and with great belongings; to wit, the ownership of leagues of land up both sides of the River, for the forests and all the farms then belonged to "The Estate." And large tile works had Curt established on the river Bank, and brought many Hollanders there; also later he had ship-building, which thing brought great gain to the Town; he made also a marvellous clever saw pit, the like of which had never been seen before, also he voyaged to see the king, the most mighty Prince, and very good Lord, King Christian 5th, now of blessed memory, for by the help of his powerful and noble countrymen, he had hope to come by royal Grace and Favour, and he had at divers times *audience*, and pleased the King with his great strength and by his Comely person. Then, said he to the King, in all humility, that it was a bygone Custom that when the King of His grace came to those parts he should take lodging on "The Estate." Two kings had lain there, and King Christian 4th of Blessed memory, even twice; and now in all humility he prayed for the same Favour. And the king did not deny it him. But Curt's purpose therein was to again receive all those privileges which he had forfeited in his Fatherland.

And he returned home, and found with his courtly fashions that the old House on "The Estate," albeit that it was a fine house in every way, large and costly, must be pulled down, and a Castle built to honour the king when he should come withal; so forthwith he fell to work. But then he took a liking to Hans Fürst's house for a dwelling Place, the one, namely, hard by St. Mary's in the Market Place, while the new castle was building; so he drove the aforesaid Hans from it till such time as the Castle should be Roofed.

It was brought about in this manner: Curt forbade the sailors, craftsmen, and fishers to buy so much as a measure of Ale, a dram of Spirits, or an Ell of cloth. For the lewd mariners and their kinsfolk are not like landsfolk, they worship those who rule over them, for they and their forebears have let themselves be treated like dogs on sea and land; they are ill at ease if they are not ordered hither and thither, sworn at and beaten, and they join in their skipper's dissolute life. But as well Curt allowed them free land on the mountain on all sides, as many as there was room for, and besides gave them wood at small cost for their buildings, so that now

there is almost a town on the mountain which can be seen from afar, as is known to every ship which comes in. Atop of all, the Pilots have built themselves a Look Out.

It can be safely said that without the support of these men Curt and his descendants could never have ruled and roystered as they have done to this day; nay, the more masterful their ways, the more they rose in the eyes of these Men, for that is the manner of them.

For his lawless ways then Curt in all his life never made any reparation. People still repeat the words he was wont to use when any man asked such of him. "Thou shalt get thy pay from —, thou cursed Peasant," he would say in his German fashion, for he never spoke our tongue right, and "Peasant" he would call any man he was wroth with; for in his Country the peasant is held in contempt, nay, almost as a brute beast; he may own neither house nor land, but must work for his lord, both he and his. Death alone can release him. Nay, 'tis even so likewise in Denmark.

But as respecting the aforesaid Hans Fürst, as he had naught else but his trade he must needs go over to the other side of the Market Place to Siegfried Brandenburg's old House on the left; for he had two, and there he abode till Curt returned to his Castle.

Curt did not build it all as it now stands; neither the long wing on the right, nor the great outbuildings; neither did he build the garden wall which is on both sides, for that was done by his son. But the great House with the steps and the Tower, that was built by him; and the road between the two walls, that was done by Master Curt, for before there was only a path and that did not go the same way, but outside the garden to the Right, as may be seen to this day; also the trees on both sides of the road were planted by Curt himself, every one of them, for he had a lucky hand in that way which he well knew, for the larger part of the garden which is now on both sides was planted by him; and he brought hither many new and costly Trees, Plants, and flowers from Holland which greatly joyed his half crazy wife whenever she was allowed a little liberty, for she loved flowers well.

The inside of the Castle for the most part is not as Curt left it, for what he did was undone of his Son Master Adler,

for thus he was called after the great Sea Hero, Cort Adler. For that was a jest of Curt to call his son Adler, since he had called himself Curt, for thus the Admiral's name was turned end for end.

The Royal Bed and other furniture in the king's Chamber which are now to be seen are not Curt's either. Those which he had bought now stand in another Chamber out of the passage to the left. In that bed slept Master Adler himself. That remains, and the furniture. But for the king's Chamber Master Adler brought all new from Holland what time he himself went there from Copenhagen with his ships. It was at that time also that he bought the hangings which are now in the King's Chamber by the side of his sleeping-room, and also he bought the great *Carosse*, whereof more anon. But, on the other hand, the pictures in gilded frames all belong to Curt's time. Those in the Knights' Hall are copied from pictures in his father's Castle, and represent his ancestors.

I had almost forgot to relate about the tower which never was finished and the reason thereof. The Man who first directed the Building was a master builder from Lübeck. But he wearied there, not getting his pay, and so went home. Master Curt went after him in a swift sailing ship belonging to a Dane, which just then lay in harbour, but he did not come nigh him. The second builder was from Holstein, or the parts adjacent thereto. Curt had at that time with him a wench of rare beauty. She was the wife of a Flemish skipper whom Curt had enticed to come to him, and as he would not give her up, the skipper was fain to depart. Now the master builder fell in love with her, and she with him, and Master Curt sorely maltreated them, and had them stript and driven down the Market Place. They got away at last in a boat; the builder was brought to a sorry pass; I know not what further became of them.

After that Curt gave up the Tower, which indeed was very hard to build; and as it was bruited about that the king was like to come that summer, he had a wide roof set over it and covered it with tiles as is commonly done, and so it stands, for no one has touched it since then. Now Curt had put himself to great cost for the honour of seeing the king under his Roof. At this time "The Estate" was still all one, and the high banks on each side of the river and all



round the valley as far as might be seen were covered with fir woods, and the same on the Islands. That is all different since the merchants took the fir-woods in pledge, but this giving in pledge had begun in Curt's time.

And now I must relate to you the Rest of Curt's life, firstly that his wife had been for a long time half silly. She was a fair woman to look on, but she could never abide him, so she remained shut up. The marks are still to be seen in the chamber along to the left, which her feet have left by the door, where she vainly sought to get out, and likewise can be seen the marks of the iron bars before the window, which Curt put there after the time when she sprang out into the garden, sorely wounding herself thereby. At the time when the Castle stood open, after Curt was dead, and his sons were abroad, we could see what she had written all round the walls. This writing had never been known of by Curt, or by those who minded the estate while his sons were still young, or during their absence, but the sons had it washed off. 'Twas thus I saw it when first I came as a student to the Town. For the most part it was verses from the Psalter, but plaints as well, and other quaint conceits which touched me by their simplicity. Thus of a cloud-berry which had been frozen. That is the tenderest sight in Nature, she wrote, and verily since then how often I have thought of it, for especially by the Road side in frost and thaw how true it is.

But now I must tell of what once happened while she was well and sat at meat with Sieur van Geelmuyden, the especial friend of Master Curt, and a merry man. Suddenly her madness came upon her again as she sat at board, and flinging her knife at Curt, she cried that that very day had she been told that Curt had a hundred Children about in the town. Then remarked Van Geelmuyden pithily, "Noble Ingeborg Curt, no one should believe more than half of what malicious folk say." Now Curt and all his guests laughed beyond measure at this, and, for the sake of the saying, Master Curt gave Van Geelmuyden, to whom, moreover, he ever after set great *fiduce*, the house at Bommen; the same may still be seen there, it is that one where the second Story stands well-nigh two ells out beyond the first, and which is hard by that which was gotten by the Bailiff.

The House still bears witness to the *piquante* saying called

a *bon-mot*, which word the people have turned into Bommen, which name the whole street bears at this day.

Never was there dung moved up at "The Estate" in the Spring time, nor the Midden emptied, but that the bodies of children were found therein, for Master Curt led a lusty life, both with his maid-servants and others whom he caused to come up there. When the now departed Bishop of Christiansand, the worshipful Magister Jersin, was to make a visitation in the Town, some short space before Curt's death, and Curt heard thereof, he begged that he might have the honour of housing and feasting him while he abode here, which thing the Bishop in no wise refused. So Curt went forth to meet him with one of his ships which chanced to be in port, and took with him the Parson, the town Council, and the king's trusty servants, and a goodly company of burgesses, and prepared a noble feast on board of the ship for the Bishop, whom they fetched from the house of a Parson of those parts, and he also, and the others remained of the company. And they all came on shore in such condition as was a sight to behold; Curt took the Bishop for his share, and when they were come to the steps up to the house and were about to mount them, the Bishop turned round and said, so that all might hear, that those were the finest steps he had ever seen in the whole Country Side. Then answered Curt, "These Steps, your Grace, are singular in another manner, for more maids have gone up them than have ever gone down." He said this in his German tongue, but that was the meaning of it. I had it from one who was a lad at the time and was standing there on the steps with the Welcome Cup for Master Curt, of which the Bishop drank and handed it to him, but he who stood on the steps was in after days Counsellor Niels Ingebrechtsön, who at that time was clerk to Curt. It was he who related this.

And now I must to Curt's death, for it was in this manner that it fell out. There came a peasant with wife and daughter to the town, and although there was great gathering of peasants at that time, no man had seen any of such fine presence as these, and this thing was spoken of at a banquet which was held at the Castle, and specially was praise given to the daughter, and so it fell next day that the peasant with wife and daughter were commanded by Curt to come up to the Castle. There they were treated like the grandest folk

and were shown all the rooms in the House, but the end of all this was that several of Curt's people came in to them and the maid was separated from her father and carried away by force; full of wrath was she and implored her father to ask for a large recompense. He did so, but Curt would have nothing to do with it. So then came the father with his complaint to the King's Bailiff, who counselled him to take things as he found them, for no man had ever yet got recompense of Curt, for all those in authority were on his side, both of church, and army, and worthies, and Patrons at Court, unto all which might be added that Curt could safely depend on the people of the lower sort here in the Town. But the peasant went up by himself to Curt, and in the court-yard behind the stable between it and the Byre he found him and there again he asked for compensation. "Get thy compensation from —, thou cursed Peasant," answered Curt, for that was ever what he answered. Then the peasant seized Master Curt and held him where desired. But he took his compensation with a thrust of his knife. There was no one there in the Court Yard but a few women, and an old groom who stood by and saw it. Curt was flung down upon the dung heap and there his life passed from him, where the bodies of his children had lain before him.

Hardly could folk credit the news of it, but came up to see. Never before had Curt given back before any man, and now he had been slain like a helpless child. At last it was noised about that the Evil One had been there, and had taken Curt's punishment on himself, and, what indeed somewhat confirmed this was, that from that day the peasant could never be found, and not even his name was known, and he himself seemed unknown to the other peasants who were in the town, but these clowns know how to be silent, so that there is nothing certain in the matter.

But whoever it was, this thing is certain, that it was from the hand of Almighty God, for without his Will there falls not a sparrow to the ground. His ways have been brought to pass by other hands, in order that this great sinner should end his days upon a dung heap.

May God's name be praised eternally. Amen.

## CHAPTER II.

## WHAT FURTHER CAME TO PASS.

CURT's sons were at this time at Copenhagen, under the charge of Magister Owe Gude, with him they also travelled at a later time and made an especial long sojourn with Curt's noble kinsmen. Adler came home at length to take possession of his lands, but Max remained abroad and studied for the priesthood, for he had a marvellous gift of speech.

Master Adler was but rarely seen in the Town, and he never went there in any other fashion than borne in a *porte chaise* by servants in fine liveries. And it was the same at the Castle, there one serving man stood in the way of the other, and all were dressed as though for a feast in some prince's Hall. Master Adler lived alone and held no intercourse with the worthy burgesses in the Town, as had never been the way before his time. Now by degrees Master Adler waxed mighty fat and had many peevish ways and tricks; thus he spoke with no man, but listened to everything.

When he had been here a few years and all his affairs were well ordered by the hand of Torbiörn Christoffer- sen, Master Adler journeyed to Copenhagen, for now was Christian V. of blessed memory no more; but our good Lord and Prince, the most mighty and gracious King Frederick IV. (whom may God sustain and adorn with all virtues) had now become our King. And Master Adler went on his knee before him, with great difficulty, and prayed the King to fulfil the gracious pledge given by his Father, of blessed Memory, to the Elder Curt now departed, and that he would condescend to come to the Town, and be under his humble roof, such time as he first came to Norway, where all men hoped for his coming. Now the King wot well the design hid under this request, namely, that Master Adler should obtain those titles of nobility which his father had lost in his youth. This the King was graciously pleased to listen to.

Thereupon Master Adler went to Holland, for he deemed not one of the preparations good enough for him, which his father had made. From there he came back with the great *Carosse*, which was then seen here for the

first time. The War Commissary, Master Synnestwedt, thought it not fitting for Master Adler to drive in a *Carosse*, for he was no Person of high rank, and complaint was made of the matter. Now in this fashion did it first become known from Copenhagen that Curt had been of noble birth; from that time forward he was never seen without Out-riders and Attendants, besides the Coachman, and two Servants behind. Wherefore he must have also five horses on account of the Hills. But the townsfolk held it an honour to them that their lord had such great privileges.

But while he was at Copenhagen it had come to Master Adler's knowledge that in the Palace where the King then abode, neither the King's servants nor attendants lay under the same roof with Him, as might have been expected, but only the king and his Family. On the contrary, the King's attendants, and the serving men and women lived in a wing by themselves, and it was for this reason that Master Adler had the long right wing added to the New house, as may still be seen, and this should be used by the King's attendants and servants as well as by Master Adler himself, and by his servants, when the King should come. But Torbiörn Christoffersen, his trusty steward, refused downright to add a wing on the left hand, and threatened to go, and for this reason it is that the right wing stands alone; neither did Master Adler attempt to finish the Tower, for already many mortgages had been given on "The Estate," by reason of all this display, and Torbiörn Christoffersen could in no wise bring both ends to meet; so some of the heaviest mortgages had to go at a great loss, and, in the same way, the portions of ground, let to certain men in the Town, were sold to any who could free themselves. It was in this manner that the parcelling of "The Estate" began.

Master Adler's younger brother, Parson Max, was a knowing man in all matters of business, and he supported Torbiörn Christoffersen. And now that I take on me to draw a picture of Parson Max, God forbid that I should bear malice against a dead man who has done me harm in many ways, for it was in this self-same year that I became the unworthy Parish Clerk and Choir Master of the Church of St. Mary in this Town. I will not fill this costly paper by telling of the strife which was between us, concerning

the vessel which was bought at the Public sale, after Master Curt's death, and which came to me by inheritance ; or again with the dispute which arose when I was to read the sermon from Dr. Martin's Book, in Parson Max's stead, he being that day unfit through liquor. Up comes Master Max into the Pulpit and flings me down. All this I will keep concealed now that he is under ground ; so it is not for that that I have noted down the Truth about him ; but in order that those who come after may see how wonderful have been the ways of the Lord in dealing with this Family, and also that it shall remain plain to be seen how this Town, more than others, must be under God's Protection, who has so singularly cared for it, even to the overthrowing of its Tormentors.

From the moment that Parson Max came, he played the Master and bully, first towards his brother and "The Estate," and then over the whole place. He was worse than his father Curt, inasmuch as he was learned, and could with great prudence, and skill, twist and turn both people, and things. He was also a mighty lunged man in the Pulpit. The time when the terrible mishap befell, namely, that St. Mary's Church was burnt down, being struck by lightning from Heaven, an admonition to us all, as is related in another place in my *Manu Scriptum*—that time I say, Parson Max preached every Sunday through the summer, from a hillock, and from thence was heard all over the Town ; many people lying off in their boats in the harbour heard him, likewise from the windows away on the Point, but not the words ; nay, a skipper told me himself how, as his ship was being towed up the North Channel, they could all hear a screaming like that of a Woman in Labour, nor could they tell what it might be. For at a great distance a man's voice sounds like that of a woman. So truly this may be said in praise of Parson Max, that he wrought a very moving Fear on all who went to Church in his day, and he would in no wise allow that any should stay away, for he asked for them from the Pulpit, or sought them at their homes. Wherefore the Church has never been so well frequented as then. The lower people held wonderfully to him as before to his father ; for he often condescended to come to their weddings and Buryings, and tasted their ale, and further gave them useful counsel in regard to all these, for he was of great understanding, and

beside knew them all by name, men and women. By degrees he got the whole Town under his hand, so that nothing was done in those days, in house or out, but the Parson must have an account of it, neither might any bake or brew unless the Parson gained by it. If the poor had nothing else to give there was always Fish. No one, high or low, dare give his daughter in Marriage, or in any other manner alter his Position, without Master Max's counsel in the matter being heard. And if rich gifts, and other private contributions, were there to help, men could get from Parson Max, what were otherwise impossible. I know this well, for I relate what I know, and in no wise that which I do not know. If any went against his will, him he would persecute and harm by day and night, both he and his. This he did by means of those in authority, both dignitaries and those of the army, by his friends and his friends' friends, and his hand could even reach to Copenhagen.\* But at times good befell the Town by all this, for no one at that time went to law, but each man must bring his case to the Parson, who settled it for him. In the same way when the new Church of St. Mary was to be built, that one which men commonly called the Cross Church, everything abode in his hands, so that in truth he was the Master Builder thereof; whereby that noble work is an honour to the town, and an everlasting Memorial to him. It was terrible what money it cost, and it all went to his brother, for "The Estate" furnished both stone and wood, and all the rest by way of trade. But Parson Max collected the money, and this he did in such a way as had the place been *occuperit* by an Enemy and been burnt to the ground. For myself alone, when I begin to reckon what I had to pay, I cannot

\* As with Carl Brandenburg, on the Market Place. He had a daughter Christina, who was of a proud mind, but very fair. When Master Max's first wife died he straightway asked to have Christina in marriage, but she would not, and her father humoured her, albeit he was afraid. And at once Carl was charged of dealing in contraband wares, then for giving false weights and measures, and at last for having scoffed at God. From this last Death freed him. Then came his son home from France, and he was sent to serve as a soldier, and no man ever heard more of him. At the time those in Authority first made indictment against Carl Brandenburg, he was the richest man in the Town, but when he died his daughter had only what might allow her to dwell at the house of a peasant, and there she still abides. Many such things happened, so that none dare go against his will.

understand how I got quit of it. He was a terrible man. He lay in wait for every ship; thus his first walk each morning was to Fetaljen, on the look out, and he was there again many times in the day, and each one must do his duty. Every traveller, man or woman, whom he asked must give to the Church. Once on Fetaljen at Widow Sarah Andersen's, she who gives lodging to the sea-faring folk, he nearly came to great mishap, for she warned her guests when she saw him coming, so they would creep up into the cock-loft, or down into the cellar, in order to hide themselves, for none could withstand his persuasions or threats. Thus it fell about with rich Heinrich Arendt from Lübeck. He was here on account of the ship which the Pirates had taken from him, and had sold here, though with loss. Very well he knew Master Max of old, and he crept up into the cock-loft. Master Max was well used to this *trafique* and crept after him. However, as he was exceeding heavy, down breaks the stair with him, and he slipped and stuck fast. A heavy reckoning came to Sarah for this, she had to pay a vast *summa* for the new Church, in place of Heinrich Arendt, and he would never make good the money to her, but put her off with talk, so she never got a stiver, a thing she has often told me even with tears.

The aforesaid Sarah Andersen, widow, died on the same day, nay, even the same hour, as Master Max. I have much considered the matter, in order to find what deep meaning God may have had in it, and many have done the same. But in truth it would not be well if everything were known of us poor weak mortals.

It was in this manner that Parson Max's death came to pass. When first he came hither he could carry all that he drank, but not so at last, and when he was well in liquor he was a sore terror to the Women, who were fain to take heed for themselves with him; and so it chanced one day at the Castle that he had forced his brother into giving of a great feast, as he mostly did force him to do twice yearly, at New Year and St. John's day. Now this befell on St. John's day; but before I relate what chanced there, I must say that the passage which leads from the steps is parlous dark when the double doors are shut to, and that day they were shut, by reason of a heavy rain such as is frequent here on the coast. Master Max mistook Ane Trulsdotter, Trul Car-



sten's daughter of Bommen, for Nille, Raadmand Paavelsen's daughter, because they both wore the same sort of red cotton skirt. This befell in the passage in the dusk, and of those who know both, it can be easily understood. But Raadman Paavelsen's daughter would not be jested with, nay, she even had courage to make a great outcry against him, and there arose much noise and commotion. The counsellor fetched the Master of the house, who spoke with great wrath to his brother, and said there was too much of this in the Castle, and that Max would never rest till he had brought them all to disgrace. Never had Master Adler been heard to say so much before, but his words were well considered and seemly; but Master Max would not allow himself to be taxed with it, for he was in his Cassock, it being just after dinner, and so he rushed at his brother, and, as Master Adler was mighty heavy, he could not keep *Ballansen*, but he first fell against the wall, and at last on to the floor, and both times he struck his head with much violence. From that time Master Adler lost his Wits and no long time after, he died.

So Master Max took "The Estate" in possession for himself, and his heirs, but from the same hour that he went there, he fell into furious madness, for he believed himself to be possessed of Spirits; they were the Spirits, he said, of his Brother, and Father, and Mother, and others to boot. No sleep could he have because of them, but went from Room to Room, round all the House, and cried out, and preached against them, with mighty power; nor would he allow the windows to be shut, for by them he hoped the Spirits might depart. But watch had to be kept lest he should fling himself out therefrom. Down in the Town, folk heard him preaching in such manner as though he were verily in strife with them. So it went about that the Devil would carry off Master Max, and that all the Spirits had been sent by him, nay, it was even said that Master Max had had the Devil to serve him in all his lucky undertakings, and now the Devil would have him back, for that his Time was come, but that Master Max hoped to cheat him by his power in the use of the Word, and by his Ghostly Knowledge. And so they fought together for dear life, both by day and night, for Master Max could hold on if he were not outwitted. The whole Town crowded into the Market Place, and up into the avenue, to listen. There was a terror upon all, but none spoke of it, and further no Parson

could be found, albeit day after day messengers were sent all about ; but every one was abroad. So there was no one to help Master Max, by the Power of the Word, against the Devil.

Now one evening there shone a marvellous great light upon all the windows up at the Castle, and over the whole House, as though it were in flames. Now Anders from the Council House, also known as Anders Red-nose, was walking from the Town, whence he had come to deliver a summons. In the Avenue, hard by the House, he heard the poor man screaming with his hoarse voice, for so it now ever was, and Anders saw the flaming light over the whole building, and in the midst of it the Evil One, lying athwart the house, hard by Master Max's window, and saying, "Now must thou come, Max." Anders went no further, but turned back to the Town. As he came down to the Market Place, screaming, he told us all that he had seen and heard. And he became as frantic as Master Max himself, and he also must be shut up and bound. And now it was seen of all men, who had won in the struggle, and all awaited the end, and accordingly Master Max died the day after, but quietly, and in a peaceful frame of mind, which thing was much wondered at. Nay, he made it understood by signs, that he would be taken to his Mother's Chamber, there to die, and hardly was he there, when all unexpected comes Parson Thomasius, and he prayed for Master Max, and gave to Him the Dear *Sacramente* of the Altar, there in that very room, and he sang to him, and prayed heartily, and Master Max could now pray, though not with his voice, and there he died in the same Bed as his mother before him.

Those that were there remarked, that at that very moment the Bells chimed from the church which he himself had built. So it is after all doubtful who won, he or the Devil.

I would I had the gift of a great writer, so that I might be able to describe in every way what this Man was ; for what he was during his life, no one can know who has not been under him, as it was with me for many years. Even now I often dream of him at night, so that my wife is awakened by my great Fear and out-cries, and she wakes me assuring me that he is dead. But I am commonly bathed

in sweat from head to foot. He was three times married and would have taken a wife a fourth time, an he had not died. I have spoken with them all three. For I had often need to go to the house on account of my business. Then they told all their troubles to me, the one after the other. For he would have everything done, and that all at once. I do not use my own words, but those of Aadel Knutsdotter his second wife. She died at Candlemas, but a little before as she sat in the great Chair in the green Parlour, she called me in, for she had heard me in the kitchen. She was very weak, and her Hands trembled. I asked what ailed her? "This is what ails me," she answered, "that my husband has worn me out with bearing of children, and with toil, like the garment he wears next him, so now it is over with me. God knows who will be the next, though mayhap he knows himself." That was what she said, and, but a short while after, she died. But the next one was Birgitte Mogensdotter, the Apothecary's daughter, and the wedding was just three months to the day, after Aadel was buried. Albeit Birgitte was a big strong woman, she became so fearful when she heard that he was to have her to wife, that she filled herself with strong drink whenever she could come by any of that which her father the Apothecary dealt in. She has often told me herself wherefor she had taken to drink, and this was the reason of it. But she fought with him when she was in liquor, and in the end she poisoned herself. The Doctor, Mogens Mauritius, has since said this; she did not die of drink, as was commonly said. She was married three years, and had two sons by him. He had in all thirteen children, albeit he was not an old man when he died. By a blow he had made the eldest son, Adler, deaf of both ears, so that he became an idiot.

Even if, with my slender gifts, I could describe him as he was wont to behave when he was wroth with wives, servants, children and others, yet would I not do it. For we saw at his departing that God himself, in his unsearchable favour (for verily that is great), had forgiven him. Why then should not we, poor creatures towards whom he has sinned far less, do the like. Which thing indeed The Bishop said in the rare oration he made over him. For his burying was Mighty grand and magnificent. Never have I seen the like; I might fill several pages if I were to count the noble Persons

who were there, and say what in three days was eaten, and drunk, and said. In his lifetime Parson Max was more powerful than any who had ever been in this place. Except the King, no one had any word to say, as long as he was in his Prime. He was skilled also in the Arts, namely thus, that he helped the people in all difficulties, more especially with their accounts, and in Building. I have told about the Church, but I have forgotten to say that he was also a great ship-builder. As a little lad he had gained skill down by the dock, and later at "Holmen" in Copenhagen, where he was wont to go, and also abroad, he carefully studied this. I have heard that from himself. The ships built here in his brother's dock, under the river banks, were all built by him, and several thereof were sold abroad, bringing great fame and gain to us. But now we will leave speaking of him.

From this history we can clearly see how all has been directed of God, namely, that the Father Curt brought their Mother and himself to ruin, and Master Max, both his Brother and *himself*, and to a great degree his Eldest son, so that but little of Blessing had come with what they had stolen from Claus Mathiassön, and from many others. Likewise their strength alone was a cause of stumbling to them. In the next place we must be mindful that the King's High and Sacred name was taken in vain, in order to deceive, but for punishment it was, that in the same mighty name "The Estate" was squandered.

There are more than I unworthy, who have noted this. For, as the before-named Counsellor Niels Ingebrechtsen was at Copenhagen, in order to try to gain the office of Collector of Tolls, he said the same to the King's Confessor, who was known to him. And as Niels sought *Audience* of the King, the Confessor followed him, and, in the King's Presence, he prayed Master Niels frankly to relate all which he had told to him. And when the King rightly understood how it had befallen, that "The Estate" had come into Curt's possession, and what had been the cause of its ruin, namely, that the King's most noble name had, in all innocence, stood father to both these things, the King graciously vouchsafed to lend his ear, and after much thought to say, "The Lord is more cunning than all the rogues put together." And these words of the King, do I in all humility make mine

own, as I leave behind me this history, and repair to other Lands.

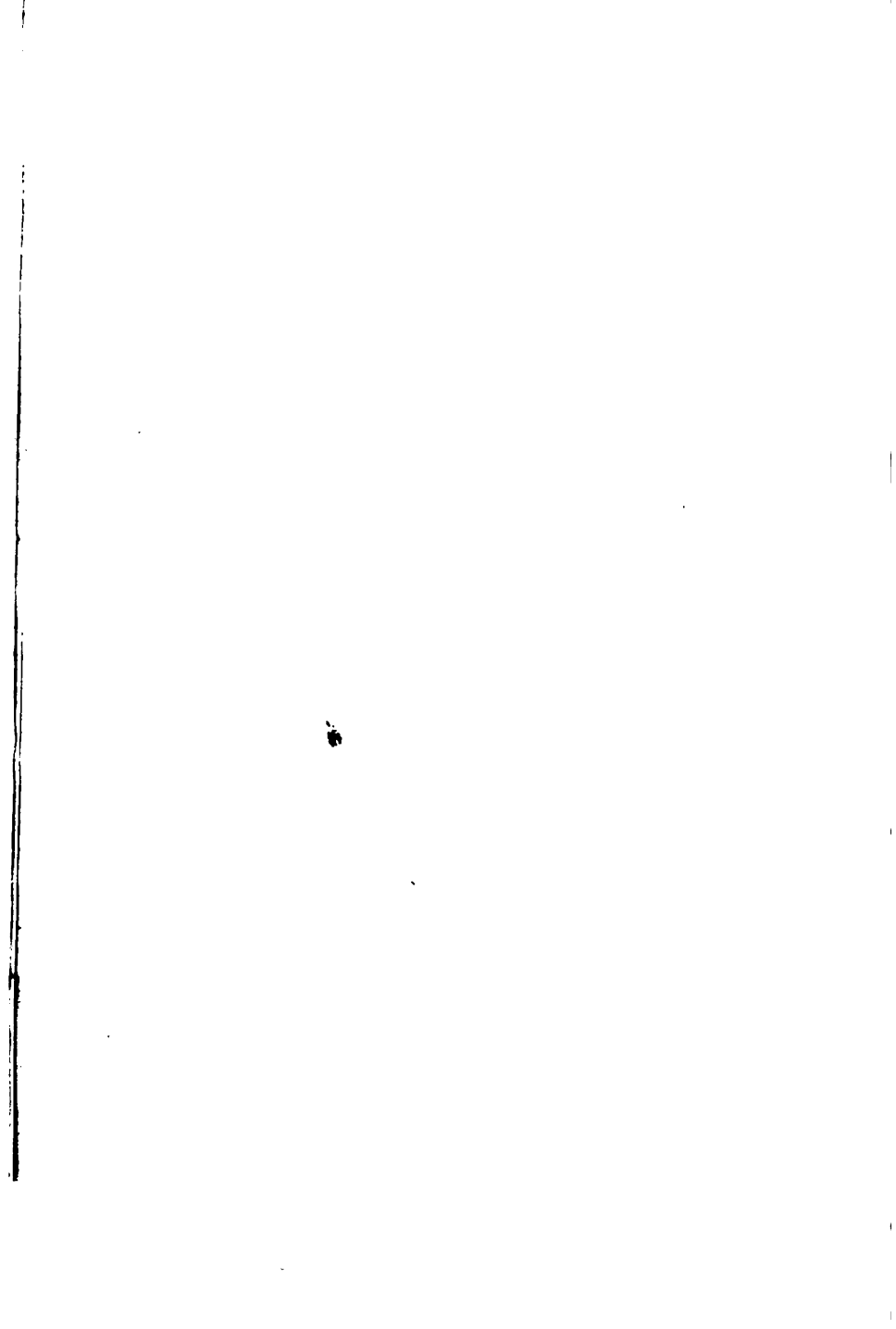
About the year 1830 the following was all that remained of "The Estate." The Mountain with the woods, in which the fir-trees were again beginning to predominate, the great ruinous house, the curious gardens, with their stone walls, on each side of the avenue, several bare fields between the gardens and the town, and a few more on either hand. Beside this some clearings round about, still belonged to "The Estate."

The then owner, a tall, dark, dirty fellow, in a green apron which reached to his feet, worked in his own garden; this, with the addition of a few cows, was his only means of subsistence.

He was the only survivor of the whole family in that part of the country, and he was unmarried.

II

JOHN KURT



## CHAPTER I.

### LONELINESS.

AT fifteen Konrad Kurt had left his home ; he could no longer bear to witness the cruelty with which his mother was treated ; for domestic tyranny was an heirloom in the Kurt family. He crossed over to Hull, and made his home for some time with an uncle, but was eventually sent, at his expense, to live in the country. The boy's nervous system had been pronounced by a doctor to be far from strong, and if he were to be made anything of, he must live as much as possible in the open air ; it was therefore suggested that he might be brought up as a gardener. Now gardening chanced to be a perfect *gourmandise* in the Kurt family, so that the lad eventually adopted it as his profession.

When, on his father's death, he returned home to see after his own interests, and to take care of his poor mother, he found but little else to take care of, his worthy father having sold all the clearing rights of his last woods, his remaining shares in some ships, and finally the tile works, sinking the whole of the proceeds in an annuity. In a word, he had the houses, the gardens, and a field or two ; all the rest Kurt had, as they say, "eaten bare" all round him. His son, he considered, must follow his example. He might easily begin by selling the field nearest to the town ; with the lower garden, it presented a splendid site for building. Konrad Kurt, on the other hand, was quite of opinion that enough of "The Estate" had been sold already. He therefore instead raised a loan, drained the gardens and fields, put the houses so far into repair, that they would not actually fall to ruin, and enlarged the forcing-house, adding another to it at a later time. In short, he showed that it was possible to



live on his inheritance, and manage a garden, in such a way as to make it pay, an idea which was then new in that part of the world.

At first he expended almost all he earned, but by-and-by things improved. A single room served him for sleeping, eating, and writing; the first room on the left side of the hall, which had been occupied by the first Kurt, and by all the different possessors of "The Estate." The room within it, which had been formerly used as a bedroom, was given by Kurt to his mother, who, poor woman, was now happier than she had ever been in her life before. All household work was done in the kitchen, on the other side of the wide hall, which, running through the whole house, divided it in two. The rest of the main building remained empty. In the autumn Kurt covered the floors of the different rooms with such portions of his produce as needed drying.

He was an impetuous man, taciturn at times, and stormy at others, but a good man at the bottom. His servants and workmen stood by him, and he stood by them. The sailors and fishermen living up on the mountain also received a great deal of kindness from him; he gave them seeds, and taught them how to cultivate their gardens, and utilise the produce. In the course of many years, the refuse from their houses had caused so great an accumulation round them, that enough soil had been formed to enable any one to have a strip of garden who chose to give the labour to it, besides which, they could carry away as much mould as they wished for from "The Estate" to mix with it. Never had the folk on the hill imagined that they would come to carrying earth from down below, that they would ever get time for, or find any fun in, such an occupation. Every Sunday throughout the spring and summer, Kurt went up to the mountain and helped them, a custom which he kept up through his whole life, but these were almost the only occasions on which he was ever seen beyond his gardens, house, and cellars.

He was up and out every morning in spring and summer by four o'clock, and as soon as it was light during the autumn and winter months. His summer costume consisted of a pair of fustian trousers, a whitey-grey linen coat, a green apron reaching down to his feet, and a cap with a wide peak. The same trousers and long apron were worn during the winter, with the addition of a tightly buttoned seaman's

pea-jacket, and a fur cap with a wide brim always turned down in such a way that the loose flaps were constantly brushing against his face. He had never been seen dressed in any other way, excepting on Sundays, when he shaved, wore a starched shirt, and laid aside his apron. He had not inherited the broad defiant forehead of the Kurts. His was a fairly high one, and noticeable for its excessive whiteness ; all the more so, perhaps, from the rest of his face being very weather-beaten. He had the eager, wild eyes of his ancestors ; his face was somewhat longer, thin, and with rather a wide nose.

Housewives and children soon learned that it was better to go up to "The Estate" and deal with Kurt himself, stern and even passionate though he was, than to go to the shop on the market-place, for he was in reality very easy to manage, and excessively fond of children ; they had to be careful, however, not to be too long in making a choice, and never to attempt to bargain.

He often seemed, when he was standing there, to be pondering some serious matter in an absent-minded way, and would then collect himself with a hasty "Ta, ta, ta, ta," ending with a long, deep "Ta-a-a !"

Everything prospered with him, his cows and garden paying him better and better. But after a few years a rumour began to spread that, since his mother's death, he spent every evening by himself getting drunk on whisky toddy. As he went regularly to bed at half-past nine, any one who wished to ascertain if this were the case, must go up there before that time. One or two people did so, and found that it was but too true ; by half-past eight he was thoroughly drunk, crying, and unable to speak distinctly.

At last this came to the ears of "old" Pastor Green. He was always, as a young man, called "old," a frightful accident having completely bleached his hair.

Pastor Green was one of the first men in Norway who came forward to combat intemperance, and who gave up their lives to the work. It was his axiom that it is useless to preach against drunkenness otherwise than by facts and actions, and that it is quite hopeless to expect to convert the individual drunkard, without knowing what cause has driven him to drink. There always is one, and if drinking is not hereditary, or become a long-established habit, it is

to the removal of the cause that you must look for its cure.

Green paid a visit to Konrad Kurt, and chatted with him, until he drew from him, that while he was living in England, he had had an intrigue with the wife of the gardener, to whom he had been apprenticed, and that she had had a child by him. She had died just at the same time as his mother.

He had been madly in love with her, he said ; yes, it had been a terrible thing to deceive her husband. " But—there really was no help for it"—and he began to cry. Then their boy, " Ah ! there never was such a merry child born before." And, in his yearning for him, the tipsy man cried, and upbraided himself with wild oaths.

Green endeavoured to induce him to ask pardon from the gardener, and bring the boy home, but Kurt had not the courage for the effort, so that there was nothing for it but for Green to use what other means he could.

Accordingly, one summer evening, he walked up to " The Estate," accompanied by a tall, dark-haired boy of twelve, and asked for Kurt, who was still at work in the garden. It was a sight to see how Kurt, as he got up out of the hot-bed where he had been digging, rubbing the earth from his hands, suddenly stopped short, and stared at Green from under the wide peak of his cap ; then turned his gaze to the dark-haired boy, and back again to Green.

At last he recognised the eager, wild eyes, larger than his by-the-way, the long, rather wide nose, and the thin face, so like his own. Unconsciously he exclaimed in English : " I beg pardon—but this lad——" He could go no further, and Green was obliged to finish for him : " Yes, this was indeed his son."

That evening Kurt forgot to get out the whisky bottle, and when he did next produce it, the boy seized hold of it and flung it out of the window against a stone—a really capital shot. Glass, sugar-basin, and spoon went the same way ; capitally thrown they certainly were. Pastor Green had begged the boy to watch when his father took out the bottle, and try to get it away from him, and it was in this fashion that the youngster carried out his instructions. His father stood for a few minutes staring at him, till at last he broke out into an irresistible peal of laughter.

## CHAPTER II.

## A GENIUS.

NEVER had any one felt surer that he had a genius for a son than did Konrad Kurt. Not only that the lad was a thorough botanist, and knew every secret of gardening, but there was not a piece of work on all the farmstead, from the cow-house to the kitchen, which he had not soon learned to know all about. It was easy to see that he had been brought up in some back premises, among gardeners, cooks, and dairy people, and had been well taught into the bargain.

Nothing would serve him but to go on board the ships, and boats, and learn how to manage them, for he had never lived in a seaport town before.

And then how he learned Norse, in only a week or two ! First and foremost the art of swearing. His father convulsed himself with laughter over all the oaths which the lad began to make use of with the funniest accent. Then, what stories he would tell ! Even before he had properly learned the language, he could interest the work-people in a way which was really extraordinary, and he was therefore allowed to play any tricks he liked ; it was all looked upon as fun.

When he spoke Norse easily, how he would gammon them ! It was his father's delight to steal behind one of the high hedges and listen to him. The boy would tell them what the English Court was like, where he had been as page ; it was he who, with some of his companions, used to walk before the lovely young Queen, while behind came all the bigwigs. Probably he had seen something of the sort at the theatre, or in some picture. Then the tremendous warlike achievements he had seen in India, when he was over there or a little tour with the Queen of England. The father stood hidden, and admired the vivid colours in which the boy painted it all, although he still knew so little Norse. The father enticed his son to go on telling him adventures. He drank no more whisky toddy ; the boy himself inebriated him. What a genius ! ah ! what a genius !

There was a continual chasing away of cats from the garden ; they came up from the town after the birds ; and

John, as this last Master Kurt was called, having one day captured one of the most determined of the depredators, ordained that the murderer should be crucified. As not one, even of the youngest of the labourers, would help him in this, he temporarily fastened up the cat, giving her plenty to eat, while he himself went to fetch some rough boys from the harbour.

Such extraordinary sounds of glee soon afterwards reached his father's ear, that he hastened to see what it might portend, especially as some more dubious notes were mingled with the cries of delight. He found the executioners performing an Indian dance before the victim, a poor bleeding cat, fastened to the storehouse door. The boy's inordinate delight hindered him from seeing his father, whose first thought on this occasion was not that his son John was a genius; although, when he came to think it over, he must confess that it was a very remarkable invention, and decidedly well done into the bargain. It is no easy thing to crucify a cat.

However, another occasion came when he thought differently.

As the weather was excessively bad, his father had forbidden John to go down to the garden, and the boy took his revenge by attacking his father's finest apple-tree, a young one, which was in fruit for the first time. He set to work to saw it right through at the roots, and covered it up again with earth. His father was by no means so struck this time, nor did he say much about the invention. He entirely forgot to think of his son as a genius, to such an extent indeed, that he talked to him in his room, with a new well-twisted birch rod in his hand. The boy never guessed, could not grasp, that his father was going to flog him, and when this utterly incredible, this impossible thing did happen, he rushed towards the door, with a look of mad terror in his face. His father was as supple and active as he, and sprang on him like a tiger, flung the boy on to the floor, and began beating him with an absolutely wild pleasure. John screamed, prayed, promised, begged for mercy. He got up on his knees, sprang up, and threw himself down again, his eyes seemed to start out of his head, and his cries became nothing more than a continuous, meaningless sound, his face turning almost black. The maids, servants, and

workmen came rushing in from the passage, and tore open the doors. Kurt became frantic at this interruption. He rushed first to one door, then to another, shutting them in the faces of those who stood there. He had become almost as crazed as his son, who, in the meantime, had contrived to make his escape.

Only an hour later the boy was out among the gardeners, and there could not have been anywhere, a more good-natured, more submissive, brighter, livelier lad than John Kurt.

He lent a hand first to one, then to another, with flattering coaxing words. Then he began to tell them stories about the apes at Gibraltar—why, it swarms with apes! they stand there looking across to Africa.

And then he mimicked them, snarling and making himself as inquisitive, frolicsome, timid, wild, and nasty as they. Likely enough he had seen monkeys somewhere, though not precisely at Gibraltar. As his father was passing by, he heard the fun, and concealed himself as usual, stooping down, and peeping.

That evening, he and his son had a talk together, in the very same room, the old "Kurt room." There the two last of the Kurts wept in each other's arms; the son promised to be always, always good, and the father never to beat him again—never!

It was but a short time after this, that a lad who used to run errands for Konrad Kurt, had got a new Sunday jacket. His brother, who was a mate, had bought it at an English seaport, for next to nothing, from a woman in the street, and every one concurred in the boy's belief that there had never been such a fine one seen in the town before. Alas! as he prepared to put it on the next Sunday, he found that it had been cut to pieces. The cuts were small, but so carefully executed, that though as long as it hung up it appeared to be whole, it was in reality nothing but a useless rag. Of course all thoughts turned at once to John, who happened at that moment to be out rowing. Owing to the cruel way in which his father had punished his last fault, and the affection which they had for him, every one hesitated to speak. But the gardener's boy, Andreas Berg, as he was named, had only this one jacket, and it was the delight of his heart: he could not restrain his tears; and old Kurt, at last observing

that something was amiss, the whole truth had to come out.

It really seemed impossible that John should not have known what was sure to happen, and have realised that after his performances with the cat, and with the fruit-tree, suspicion must inevitably fall upon him. It may be that he imagined that it would never go further than between the little fellow and himself, or that he might rely on his father's promise never to beat him again. Be that as it may, he came calmly up from the water, bragging before he was well inside the garden gate, of all the exploits that he had performed during the day. His father called him from the open window of his room. The boy answered him with a ringing "Yes," and was up the steps in a moment.

The instant he saw the jacket lying on the table, and a well-twisted whip by the side of it, he became as white as a sheet, and seemed entirely to lose the control of his senses. He turned round and round in a circle as he stood there, and hurriedly exclaimed, in a voice hoarse from holding back his breath, "It was not I. It was not I. It was not I. It was not I." Then, seeing his father lift the whip, he instantly changed to his own voice, crying, "Yes, it was I, it was I, it was I, it was I." "Will you ask pardon?" "Yes, yes." He was on his knees in a moment, and with his hands crossed above his head, he cried, "Pardon, pardon, pardon, pardon!" "And will you beg the boy's pardon?" "Oh! yes, where is the boy? Let us go to him." He was up and by the door in a moment, casting terrified glances at his father, who followed, with the whip in his hand, though he did not go so far as to strike him.

John fell down once more on his knees before the little boy, tearing off his own jacket and waistcoat to give to him, although no one had suggested to him to do so. An English gold coin, and two Norwegian silver ones, which were in the waistcoat pocket, fell out, and these he gave to the lad at once, an act which so touched the father that he was obliged to turn away. But a very short time afterwards, while the workmen were at dinner, John made his appearance, and went through the performance of the Gibraltar monkeys for their benefit. Then, returning to his father, he asked him confidentially, if part of what had been taken up in the garden that day, might be given to the men to take home,

and, on permission being granted, he went off with them to help to carry the things away. His father stood and watched him from the window.

John's next exploit was on the sea. He had probably found that such performances were dangerous on land, and it remained to be seen if there were more freedom on the water. One day he set off in a boat, with a little boy as his companion, having formed the plan of throwing the child overboard, in order that he might rescue him. The idea may have arisen from something he had read, or he may only have wished to see the boy's terror; at all events he obtained this gratification. The little fellow could not swim a stroke, and thought that if he could make his companion understand this, he would give up his plan; but in vain. The boy's terror increased every moment, he screamed with all his small strength, and John might have recognised a fear so like his own. But no. The child clung to John's clothes with all his little fingers. He was shaken off again. He seized hold of the boat, and then, utterly bewildered, tried to grasp the empty air; but overboard he went. John sprang after him, caught the boy just as he was sinking, and held him up, but it was only with the greatest difficulty that he got him back into the boat, the child having been seized with cramp. A number of people rowed out from all quarters, believing that a murder had been committed.

John did not return home that evening, and during three days search was made for him. First by every one on "The Estate," later by the police, and by a number of the townspeople who felt for his father's distress. He was at length discovered up a *sater*. He flung himself down at once, and screamed at the top of his voice, absolutely refusing to return home until he had received a promise that no one would beat him.

This last adventure made him known all over the town. Whether it were good for him or not, that every one came to the conclusion that he was not like other children, not quite right, the fact remains that even at school the masters were rather too forbearing, of course not his school-fellows—they excuse nothing.

He did the most horrible things; for instance, as he was approaching manhood, he committed an act of such



frightful indecency that it is impossible to write it, but on this occasion, his father came to the school to beg that he might be pardoned, and, as all the teachers pitied the father, who worked so honestly, it was looked over that time.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### MAN'S BREAST IS LIKE THE OCEAN.

JOHN passed an excellent matriculation, whereupon he took a fancy to become a cadet, to which his father at once gave his consent, considering that at the Military Academy he would learn order and discipline, though, as a matter of fact, if what is meant by discipline, is obedience to orders, he had no need to learn it, and he had never been disorderly in his habits. Other faults, however, he did possess, and he was twice nearly expelled from the Academy. The only thing which saved him was his behaviour to his teachers, which was always ingratiating. From the Academy he again passed a creditable examination, and became absolutely enthusiastic for his profession. He showed himself particularly good in drill. All was life, movement, and storytelling where he was, and swearing into the bargain, for by degrees he had brought swearing to a fine art. All the officers in the brigade put together, did not swear as much in the course of a year, as he did in a week. He could begin a string of oaths at one flank of the company, as they stood on parade, and keep it up till he arrived at the other. If he had used all the powers of imagination which he squandered on swearing, in painting, he could have stocked a museum; or if he had been a poet or composer, his shelves would have been full. But unfortunately his oaths will not bear repeating, for they were generally used when only men were present.

For common every-day use he was content with ordinary oaths, though, even then, his way of using them was that of a master. As an indication of the first-named description—those, namely, of his own invention—I will give one example a little toned down. On one occasion, when the company

was assembled for prayers, the chaplain had wearied them by preaching an excessively long discourse, which John Kurt declared he had once read in an old book of sermons. He therefore asked for a blessing on the chaplain in the following terms: "May Satan inwardly illuminate all through his inside with burning sermon books."

He had an unending supply of stories, which were served up in a seething sauce of imagery and cursing. His stories had this advantage in them, that everybody did not believe them.

John Kurt was tall, thin, bony, and as supple as a willow. He wore beard and moustache, but they did not grow well. The hair was ragged, and there were patches where none grew. This gave his face a look of being torn in two. When his wild eyes flashed out he was actually ugly. But his brow was clear, with the fair skin which was hereditary in his family; and sometimes, when he was at his best, a gleam would pass over it which quite redeemed his plainness. His feelings were extremely strong, and he could make others feel with him.

The finest thing in the world for a grown man, he considered, was without doubt to be a soldier and officer. He thundered out his assurances to the whole world, that no one could be a man who had not gone through his drill. "Drill and discipline," he would exclaim, using by preference the commonest expressions, for book language was not strong enough; "drill and discipline. That was women-folks' greatest loss that they never had discipline or tact in their commonplace lives—the swine!" The whole country ought to be arranged as one vast "Drill-hall." There would be no more cranky bodies then: "No, there would be—devil take me—order and sense; the whole *Storting*—devil plague them—ought to go to the parade ground and be drilled." Till that day came there would be ne'er a bit of sense in the whole crew. "The king—devil stare at me—ought to be drilled, if not the whole place would be like a pigstye, where the strongest snout shoves t'other one's out of the trough. Some one must stand over them with a whip."

How then can one possibly paint the astonishment of his comrades, his friends, and, above all, of his father, when one fine day it was announced that First Lieutenant John Kurt had applied for a discharge, which had been granted him.

He came storming home again, and whenever he was asked why he had left, he replied that the whole military system was—"devil pickle him—the most miserable buffoonery. No honourable man ought to lend himself to it. The officers were nothing but dressed-up, well-trained monkeys, who trained strong lusty lads to be monkeys as well. The generals were big monkeys with feathers in their caps, and the king was the chief monkey of all."

What was he going to do? "Why, dig the ground like his father. The earth—that was the only solid thing there was in creation, and so it was the only thing worth a rush, or that produced anything worth having. To get out of it all that tasted best, and smelt best, that was—may the devil quarter him—the finest thing an independent lad could turn his hand to." He dressed himself in the most slovenly way, and worked among the other labourers for his living.

That was all very well during the summer, but the harvest was hardly over before he discovered that—may the devil fly off with him—gardening was simply muck. It consisted in using this sort of muck, and then so much muck, and muck in that fashion. It seemed to him at last that "all the world was naught but a great muck-heap. They were the luckiest who owned the biggest. What—devil butcher him—was war other than that each one killed t'other for his own muck-heap? Poets and poetry were the flies in spring when the muck began to work."

He went off in a ship, bound for the South Sea, and was absent for several years, nor, when one beautiful spring day he returned home, could any one gain a clue as to where he had been. If he were to be believed, he had traversed the whole globe, for from that time no country or nation could be mentioned, nor anything remarkable in natural history, no ocean, no well-known building, which he had not seen, nor a single famous person with whom he was not on terms of the greatest intimacy, or, at the very least, well known to. It was evident that they were not all inventions. He had a great deal of information which could only have been acquired on the spot. He had undoubtedly some notable acquaintance, for his correspondence proved it. Later on in the summer an English nobleman and his friends sought him out to accompany them on a mountain hunting expedition.

Why had he come home? "To see his father before he died," he said; though, to confess the truth, his father was in the best of health, and not more pleased to welcome his son home, than he had been to see him depart.

John, however, declared all the same, that for his part, Heaven help him, he could not bear any longer to think that his father might be dying, and he not by his side.

From the time he returned he was all solicitude and affection for his father. He was now an old man, and allowed his son to do anything with him that he chose, and strange fancies he took at times. Such as, when he suddenly determined that his father should not eat anything. Or when he, all at once, hit on the plan of putting him into a warm bath, while he turned the cold douche on to him. Another idea was to lay him under a number of large eider-down cover-lids, in order to make him sweat, although his father had not the slightest need for such treatment. He would give a side glance at his son, and a very speaking one it was; there was neither confidence, nor fear in it, still less any good-humour, but a certain cold inquisitiveness, as though he just wished to know *what next*; and sometimes he seemed to ask, "Is this John, or is it not John?"

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## CHAPTER IV.

### SAILS IN SIGHT.

IN the autumn of the same year, a girl came home, who became the subject of conversation in the whole town, and for two reasons.

Her name was Tomasine Rendalen, and she was the daughter of the head-master, Rendalen. His name was derived from the mountain district of Rendalen, from which his father had originally come.

Rendalen was a big, strong man, who quietly, if rather ponderously, performed his scholastic duties in the town, and who, since his wife's death, had taken interest in nothing but his school, and the town reading society.

The management of his house he entirely left in the hands

of old Mariane and his children. Tomasine, who was his eldest child, possessed a more than ordinary talent for languages, together with all her mother's determination. When she was only sixteen she borrowed a little money, entered a school in England, and, while there, thoroughly mastered the English language. From thence she went to a school in France, where she taught the pupils English and acquired French; and finally to one in Germany, where she gave instruction in both English and French, and learned German. She had been away nearly five years, and had become a practised, and unusually clever teacher. She had no sooner returned home than she began to give lessons both to men and women, and thereby to pay off her debts. This aroused great admiration in the town, and procured her a very large circle of friends. Her figure excited an equally unanimous admiration, and it must be admitted that it requires something special in a girl's figure before this can happen. A beautiful face is always admired, for there can be no delusion about it. A fine figure, on the contrary, is hardly sufficient in itself to command attention. She was young, and well-made, and always dressed in the latest fashion. Like other vigorous and healthy girls, she had from her childhood longed to exercise her strength, and had taken every opportunity of doing so. In England she had set to work to practise gymnastics, and had continued them ever since. It had become a passion with her; the result was, that there was not a single girl in the town who held herself like Tomasine.

It did not in the least lessen the admiration for her figure that she had a somewhat flat nose, and that her very light hair gave her the appearance, at a distance, of being bald; as for her eyebrows, they were really not worth mentioning. Her eyes were grey, and, when without her spectacles, she screwed them up. Her mouth was much too large, but the teeth within it were as sound and regular as though her family had remained in Rendalen and lived upon hard bread. When any one saw her from behind for the first time, and she then suddenly turned round, it caused a certain disappointment. People even thought of calling her "The Disappointment," but the name did not take. Her figure carried her over all criticism. Being near-sighted she wore spectacles, the only girl in the town who did so. In those

days the fashion of using *pince-nez* had not come in, so this gave something rather unusual to her appearance. She literally shone with strength and intelligence.

Through that winter she was the most popular partner at all the balls. Her delight in being at home again, free from all restraint, and among a number of merry young people of both sexes, her happiness in feeling that every one was kind to her and liked her, were plainly visible. She often expressed her feelings in simple and natural terms; she aroused no jealousy, though it may be that this was a little strengthened by the fact that she was well aware that she was not pretty. That winter was a great dance winter, and at every dance she was present, for dancing was the most delightful thing she knew. During that winter John Kurt became for the first time a dancing man, and it was entirely for her sake that he did so. She soon heard him say this, but she knew that he could not be gauged by the rules of ordinary life, for he was always allowed to say what he liked. She looked upon him as something quite fresh, and very peculiar, but she acted as every one else did, and neither ran away from him, nor fainted, because he said that he would be d—d, pickled, boiled, and roasted if, when she danced, she were not like a young, lively, whinnying Arabian mare, or like a flock of birds in the woods in spring-time; her arms and her neck were just like a dainty, warm, little Turkish pigling, one o' them with a pink skin. She moved through the dance, Heaven help him, like a great man-of-war through the water. When he danced with her—by his honour, life, and salvation—it was like being up on the mountains of a clear autumn day, with a gun in his hand, and the tykes ranging the hillside in full cry. This, shouted in trumpet tones into her ear during every dance, only added to her amusement. The others laughed and she laughed with them. She did not possess the slightest knowledge of human nature. That cannot be learnt by going from one school to another, even though they be in foreign countries.

Kurt very soon began to visit her home; he knew the hours when she would be free, and speedily learnt her times for walking, following her about everywhere. She tried as much as possible not to be alone with him; otherwise she was pleased enough that he should come. He told her and her friends amusing stories, and touching ones sometimes.

Such, for instance, was the history of a deserted brood of ptarmigan, which he had once picked up, one by one, out of the heather, where they were running about, all downy and unfledged; he had brought them all home, he said, in his cap. This story seemed to bring with it such a fresh breath of mountain air, full of the scent of the heather, and he related it with such genuine feeling, that it brought the tears into their eyes. Such things as these seemed to inspire him; even in the midst of the wildest stories, he would often throw in some delicate, telling touch. The way in which he invariably spoke of his father attracted the girl to him. There was a mixture of drollness and tenderness in it, midway between laughter and tears: They got used to his rough descriptions, his coarse language; it could not well have been dispensed with; it gave a special colouring which charmed, while it startled them. Tomasine and her friends did not try to have it otherwise, so that at last there was no one who appeared to them to be able to relate stories except himself. Tomasine more than any one else. She felt that it was all done for her amusement.

One day, when by chance they were alone, he began to tell her about the widow of a pilot, for whom he was just then most assiduously making a collection. He saw that she liked him for doing so, and, without further preface, he declared that Fröken Tomasine Holm Rendalen was to him what a town was to a desert caravan; nay, if she laughed, it was because she did not know what it was to trudge along through endless sand, under a burning sun, exhausted, hungry, and thirsty. "It is something to see a town then, I can tell you." Well, *she* was the minaret tower, the plane-trees, and the springs of water, the wine which awaited them, and white tents, and dancing, the sound of the guitars, and the smell of roasting meat. Suppose they two were to make a match of it! If that could be, he would sell the whole garden, and they would wander away to all the most delightful places on the face of the earth. They would lie on their backs under the awnings, while their servants came and put food and drink into their mouths. Or why not stay here and carry "The Estate" gardens right up on to the mountains? What would not grow with such shelter, on such sunny hillsides, fanned by such warm sea breezes. There they would dig away into the hillside, like a couple of badgers,

and become rich people. But he saw what a fright he had put her into ; so, without any pause, he turned the conversation into a wild panegyric on his father. The fact was that the whole thing was his father's invention. He was determined to have his son married. His father was a man who would get up of a winter's night, when it suddenly turned cold, and go out to wrap bast mats and woollen rags round the frozen fruit-trees, as if they were naked children. If he wanted to cut down a bush he took the birds'-nests down first, and carried them away to some place near, or to some other bush, and stuck 'em fast there. What wonder then if his father gave a thought for him too ; but, as for him, he could wait, he was quite happy as he was. And he started off with a story about some cows who would not eat the grass because it looked black, but he put them on large green spectacles, so that the grass looked quite nice and fresh—" then they munched it up, I can promise you."

She could gather in the meantime that John Kurt was disappointed. She herself had felt startled, she hardly knew why, and yet, on second thoughts, she did, for she had heard, that very day, some stories of the terribly licentious life he led.

It so happened, strangely enough, that a friend of her late mother came in to see her, and after a short preamble, began warmly to advocate Kurt's cause. Only an hour afterwards another one arrived, and another after that, all bent on the same errand. He was certainly not like other people, that must be confessed, but that he would make a famous husband, each one was as certain as the other. As to his immoral conduct, that was bad, it must be admitted ; but it was most likely not worse than other people's. Why, there were married men living in the town who were by no means all that they should be. The great difference was that he did everything openly. Each one of the three ladies spoke as strongly on the subject as the others, and Tomasine began to be somewhat of the same opinion.

John Kurt himself held aloof for a time, excepting so far as that whatever walk he took to or from the town, and they were not few, he always contrived to pass the Rendalens' house, notwithstanding that they lived quite on one side, to the left of the market-place, up towards the field. Every



time he passed up and down, he took off his hat, if there were only a cat to be seen at the window. Beside this, he sent a bouquet there every morning. The dawn was not more certain to come than it was. Old Mariane, who received it, had always some little thing to say about Tomasine, and he, on his part, generally let fall some special remark, such as, for instance, "God bless your throats."

A very short time after her mother's especial friends had called upon Tomasine to advocate John's cause, her own followed their example. Some of them had in past days taken quite an opposite view of him. They had spoken of him almost with horror. They could not bear his mendacious stories, or put up with his coarse language; or indeed with him, himself. He was "disgusting." Now, however, they began to admit that there was something interesting in him all the same: a kind of demoniacal, overwhelming power.

The fact was that he had called upon them all, choosing first the one whom he knew was most set against him. He told her that he was well aware of this fact, and that he respected her for it. It was quite true that he was a wretched, contemptible fellow. But it was just for that very reason that he had come to her, for she really was the most honest and clear-sighted conscience in the town; there was but one opinion on that point. She really *must* help him. She did not know the whole history of his life, that was the fact. She did not know how it was that from his boyhood upward he had been misunderstood, and indeed continued to be so still. And for that very reason would always remain an oddity. But really it was hardly necessary for him to say anything. She saw right through every one.

He told another that her hands were so plump, so dainty, and round and soft, that one longed to nibble them with one's coffee.

He swayed and turned them with his stream of talk, he doused them cold, he blew them warm, he startled them, and touched them. They did not completely lose their heads. They knew perfectly well that it was not all honest truth, spontaneous nature, but even that very fact worked as an apology for him; he did not think about sheltering himself, and most people are flattering when they wish to obtain anything.

A little time afterwards the whole town from one end to the other was convulsed with laughter, for when, in the course of the spring, a little sempstress declared Kurt to be the father of her child, he acknowledged it before every one, and had it brought with great state to church to be baptised, giving it the name of Tomasine.

The amusement was renewed when he declared, on being asked how he could possibly have done such an extraordinary thing, that if he had any voice in the matter, Lord help him, every child in the town should be called either Tomas, or Tomasine. It was quite touching.

Just about that time his father died under somewhat strange circumstances. The old man had sent a message to Tomasine, asking her the next time she went for an evening walk, to be so kind as to come in to see him, as he was far from well. Those two had been friends of old. Many times, when she was a little girl, he had filled her pocket with cherries. She always looked so fresh and healthy, and an old gardener has an eye for such things.

When she went up there, she found him sitting in his room on the left. It was the first time she had ever been in it. The walls were hung with some stiff, and rather dark material, apparently leather, which had at one time been painted and gilded. In the corner by the window stood a large press, a splendid piece of furniture, at least two hundred years old, and most artistically carved. Quite in front of the window was a clumsy unpainted table, littered over with papers, samples of seeds, newspapers, and scraps of food. The old man sat there, in an ancient armchair, with a short, broad leather back. He got up, and insisted that she should take it. He was dressed in his grey linen coat, his long apron, and wore slippers down at heel. On his head he had his wide-peaked cap, and a thick neckcloth wound round his neck. He was rather hoarse, and he seemed ill as well. "The spring was so sharp this year," he said. The tall, gaunt man began to pace up and down between the table near the window, and the bed beside the wall next the wide hall, which divides the house in two. Up and down he walked along the wall, past the great stove, with the two "Oldenborgs" on it, both in enormous wigs, his steps keeping time to the ticking of an old eight-day clock which hung

came in. Those belonging to her dress were wide and open, so that her wrist, and the lower part of her arm, contrasted very prettily with her black dress. She delighted in their strength, as those do who are much given to gymnastic exercises. But her eyes turned involuntarily to her face, her weak point. It was incredibly ugly. That flat nose, those thick lips, and that hair which was the colour of her forehead—you could hardly see it—and those eyebrows, light, short bristles, so thin that they were quite invisible. Ah! no, it would never do to make herself of importance. John Kurt loved her so heartily, and was unhappy! . . . absolutely alone, and so unhappy! . . . And his father had made her sit down in his own chair!

Shortly afterwards old Mariane walked up the avenue as fast as she could. She halted once though, and took out of a newspaper a dainty, ah! such a dainty letter. She must look at it.

When it was put into John Kurt's hand, he tore it hastily open, and took out a sheet of thick English note-paper—with a dove on it—the paper was very good, and the dove well-designed. He read the following words, hastily written in a practised hand:

*"I will do it.*

*Tomasine."*

John turned to Mariane. "Now, what a man father was," he said; "if he had not died just now, small chance if I had ever got her."

He would have married the next day. To his immense astonishment, Tomasine would not hear of it. Nor even that the marriage should be the next week. She now gave up all her pupils to begin to prepare herself for her new position. She was completely ignorant of domestic matters, except so far as to be able to keep her own things in order. From a child she had only cared for her book. John Kurt was delighted when he heard of her deficiencies; *he* could do everything. Did any one doubt it? He could wash up and clean, were it parlour or kitchen, better than any housemaid or cook in Norway. He pushed old Mariane suddenly on one side, and showed them, bit by bit. He did everything as quickly, nicely, and carefully as the handiest girl—that was a fact. Besides this, he could cook all

sorts of food ; dishes which they did not know by name. He could roast and boil, knit, sew, and darn : he could wash clothes ; starch and iron. He, and no one else, would teach Tomasine. Why should they not begin at once ? And so it was settled. He himself made purchases, and invited friends to the Rendalens'. The days which followed were the most amusing the family had ever spent. The whole town was filled with rumours. Friends and friends' friends came to look on. And to listen ! What noise and fun ! What tales of where he learnt it all ! Sometimes among the gold-diggers in Australia, in constant peril of his life. Then on a Nile boat, with a party of English, where the cook directed the whole expedition. Sometimes in Brazil, at an hotel among the niggers ; or in the mines in South America. Then suddenly he was at Hayti, on board a large steamer ! Then deserting from her. He did not spare local colouring, or indeed any colouring ; coarseness and vituperation rained down like fire from heaven on the different places and people.

But the work went on. Tomasine was assistant cook, scullery maid, ironer, and darning. Even in the last he was her superior. He worked just as quickly as he talked, and just as eagerly. He interrupted himself with the most perfect good temper whenever she made a mistake, for she was really very clumsy. He captivated them all now, without exception. But surely this teaching and fun could go on as well or better up at "The Estate." By degrees every one agreed to this, and Tomasine gave in.

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## CHAPTER V.

### HOME LIFE.

THEY were married one afternoon at home. Only the family was present, and after leaving the table they walked up to "The Estate," arm-in-arm. It could not be concealed that there was much feverish excitement. Indeed, it was the more apparent because they wished all to go on as if nothing were on foot.

Hardly anything had been done up at the house.

Things were to be arranged by degrees. The first room on the left was still a sitting-room and dining-room. The next one a bedroom. The best furniture of every description which the house contained, some of it old and valuable, was collected there. The leather hangings on the walls had been washed, but were not much the better for it. The heavy carved ceiling, on the contrary, was much improved by being cleaned. An attempt had also been made to clean the pictures, but not altogether with success; as the frames had at the same time been regilt they presented altogether a ghastly appearance. This was almost all that had been done. A bath-room had been fitted up next to the bedroom, shortly after John Kurt returned home. This was now divided, so as also to form a dressing-room. The kitchen, on the other side of the hall which divided the house lengthwise, was like a huge dancing-room; a new English kitchener had been fixed there, and the newly married pair proposed to spend a great part of their time before it.

For a few days they were quite alone, nor did they go out later on. But one or two ladies at a time were invited. And soon they were all as merry up there as they had been before down at the Rendalens'. Just previous to her wedding, and for a short time afterwards, Tomasine was thoroughly in love with John Kurt; entirely wrapped up in him, absolutely happy, and in boisterous spirits.

But this exuberance was contrary to her nature, and did not suit her. She looked excited and almost vulgar. She felt this when her friends looked at her. Indeed, her glass had already told her the same thing. It made an impression on her, but she put it aside. It returned now and then, like a secret dread. She tried naturally to shout it down, and only made things worse. Her friends whispered that she had become disagreeable; she, who had pleased by her unconscious manner, was now either strangely abstracted, or boisterous.

One small thing excited observation. None of her friends were admitted further than the sitting-room and kitchen; all was carefully locked up. She positively kept watch to see if they watched her. Very soon, however, some one spied on them all. It became impossible for any one to be alone with Tomasine without John Kurt opening the door, and putting in his head, but

no sound was heard before he made his appearance. All the locks had been examined and oiled, and the doors opened noiselessly. If they walked along the broad paths in the garden, he came out unexpectedly from behind a hedge. If they whispered when he was present, he became restless and perverse, not exactly with them, but in such a way as to leave no doubt of his meaning. He generally poured out his wrath over Tomasine's untidy habits. Her friends thought either that they were in the way, or that something was going on which they would rather be away from. They came more and more rarely.

Tomasine was the last to understand her husband's uneasiness. She fancied at first that it was only to scare them, that he came upon them in that way. His complaints of her untidiness were merited. One has to *learn* to keep everything tidy about one. Later, when there could be no mistake, she asked herself if he were jealous of her friends. In that case he ought to have been so before; they came oftener then than now. Was he afraid, then? Afraid of what? That they should talk about him? What could they say? She knew as she asked it. He was out at the moment, so that she had time to cool down a little. It was not her nature to come to hasty determinations, nor was it clear to her how she ought to take it, or what rights she had, or had not, in her married life. She had never spoken to any one on the subject, never read about it. The pain lessened little by little as she pondered. She took up her work again, and tried to appear as if nothing had happened. Kurt, however, observed at once that her manner was different. From that time forward he sometimes saw that she had been crying. Every time he came in he asked if any one had been there. "No." Once she heard him, a little while afterwards, ask the gardener if any one had been with "the Missis" whilst he was out.

He was shy with her and guarded, actually uneasy. But he could not continue this long, and without warning became impatient and rough; then repented his violence and begged her pardon twenty times, and this again and again.

Tomasine was not nervous, so that she was neither frightened by the former, nor did the latter make her alter her behaviour. She was friendly, but always reserved. So things drifted on towards a storm. They both knew it.

The changes from cold to hot became more sudden, the squalls which preceded them heavier, the stillness and sultriness which followed them more dangerous. Yet in the midst of it all he could be so wonderfully kind, so naturally bright and considerate, that sometimes she forgot all presentiments, and gave herself up to the hope that, under her quiet guardianship, which he quite understood, their life might at last become what she realised by an ordinary, honourable married life.

One afternoon he came in from the garden, where he had worked all day. He wished to change his clothes, for he was invited to a men's dinner in the town. He went into his bedroom, took off his coat and waistcoat, came back again and talked of taking a bath, walked up and down as though considering something. Tomasine felt that things were not safe. She was herself dressed to visit a friend in the town, and he looked closely at her. She thought it would be wiser to slip away, but when he saw that she was preparing to start, he suggested that she should wait for him, and that they might go down together. She excused herself on the plea that she was expected. "There would be time enough for gossip, she could help him a little first." She inquired how. This he would not submit to. She had no business to ask questions. Beside that, she was not obedient. She had not learnt that yet. She ought to understand that now she had a master, and that she must obey him "in all things." It was the Bible itself that said so. By way of answer, she put on her bonnet which lay ready on the table, and took up her mantle and parasol. On this he became furious, and asked her if she thought he had not observed her. She thought herself so much better than he was, and was therefore constantly spying on him. It was certainly true that she had not had the opportunities of leading the life he had, but that was in reality the only difference between them. At the bottom she was exactly the same as he was, precisely, so she really need not keep up this farce any longer. This came so unexpectedly to Tomasine, that she cried out "Boor," took up her things, and turned to leave the room. The door leading into the hall was behind her, he sprang to it, turned the key, and took it out. Then going to the other doors, he fastened them, keeping the keys, and as well as this, he closed all the windows.

"What are you thinking of?" she asked, turning deadly white, and taking off her spectacles. She forgot her bonnet.

"You shall learn for once what you really are," he answered, and to her consternation he called her by the worst name which can be given to a woman. And, as he spoke, he came so close to her that she could feel his breath on her face. He said things which stung her like scalding water. It was to such a wretch she had given herself. Her close proximity and the scent of her best clothes gave him an inspiration. Like lightning it flashed upon him, that the time had come to humble her. She thought too much of herself, as she stood there with her strong figure. She dared to wish to be independent. She was his—his thing. He could do whatever he liked with her. But she put herself on the defensive. He warned her first. He asked what she was thinking of—of coercing *him*? She! Suddenly he screamed out, "I am not afraid of your cat's eyes."

Now a fight began in the old Kurt house—between a Kurt and his wife, with all the strength possessed by two human beings—and on his side with the recklessness which disappointed love of rule and thwarted will can give: entirely alone, with closed windows and doors, and without a word uttered. The table was overthrown, and everything on it spilt or broken, chairs were knocked over, the new sofa pushed far out along the floor. Down they went themselves, but were up again directly. They got across to the other side of the room, knocking against the heavy clock; it swayed and fell, striking him on the shoulder and head, so that he was obliged to pause and recover himself. She had time to try a door, or at least to alter her position, but she did neither; she looked at herself, for she had hardly a whole garment upon her. Her hair hung dishevelled about her, and she felt pain in her head. The only thing she did, however, was to free herself from the remains of her crinoline, which she threw from her, and which caught in the legs of the table. She felt that she was bleeding. He had struck her on the mouth and nose, and the scratches smarted. They set to again. This time he knocked her down at once, but he gained little by it. For he was not so much stronger than she, that he could afford to expend his strength without soon losing all that he had gained. Hardly was one of her hands free before she was near him again. She was as agile



as a cat ; he moved slowly. He was breathless, and deadly white, as if he were going to faint. She saw this as she stood before him, in her rags. She was breathing hard as well, but could still go on. He now heard her speak for the first time. It was all she could do to say between her gasps for breath : " Won't you—try—once—more ? " He went backwards towards a chair, the only one left standing, and sank down on it. He did not look at her, but sat there, panting and overcome. It was some time before one or two long breaths showed that he was beginning to recover himself. She placed herself by the stove, holding her rags about her, and asked him to open the bedroom door ; she wanted to get some clothes. He did not answer. She scoffed at his utter weakness and misery. He listened without a word ; he pointed at her, and his face expressed how hideous she was. His spite at last gave him words. She looked, he said, as she stood there in her rags and with her hair torn, like the roughest and most disgusting of drunken women. But he put no colour into what he said, nor a single oath. " Can't you swear now ? " she asked. He took this quietly ; merely got up and walked slowly to the bedroom ; took the key out of his pocket, and opened the door. As he went in he looked at her, then fastened it behind him, leaving her standing there. She heard him go into the bath-room and take a shower bath, and then dress himself. She sat down and waited. After a long time he came out again, ready for the dinner, locked the door behind him and withdrew the key, put his hands in his pockets, and began to whistle. He went past her, across the overthrown furniture and other litter on the floor, without attempting to pick up anything, finally striding over the clock-case to reach the outer door. " You will find plenty to amuse you here," he said. He unlocked the door and locked it again outside. She heard him take away the key.

All the people about the place thought that they had both gone out, for everything was fastened—even the sitting-room doors, which was not, as a rule, done. By nine o'clock perfect silence reigned over the homestead, both within and without. It was late in August, and there was no moon.

At ten o'clock a man walked hurriedly up the avenue. He saw no light in any part of the great building. He mounted the steps and entered the hall, where the darkness obliged

him to grope his way to the room-door. He was evidently unfamiliar with the place. He knocked, but received no answer. He tried the door, it was fast. He knocked again, thundered, waited, but no one came. Again he knocked, louder than before, and called "Tomasine."

"Yes," was answered at once from within.

A moment later, close by the door, "Is that you, father?"

"Can you not open the door?"

He knew by her voice that she was crying.

"Where is the key, then?"

"John took it with him when he went out."

A moment's silence, and then the question, "Has he locked you in, then?"

"Yes," was the answer amid her sobs.

She heard him turn away again and descend the steps, and, to her astonishment, go away without a single word.

She needed some one so much. It was unbearable. She began to feel frightened, for it must have some meaning. Why did he go? Where was he going? To meet Kurt! What would happen? The blood began to circulate again in her half-clad body, for as Kurt had left her she still remained. She hurried to the window, but could see nothing, and at the same moment she heard some one on the steps again. She ran to the door, but could not tell by the footsteps who was coming, they advanced so cautiously.

"Is it you, father?" she asked.

"Yes, it is I, with the keys," he answered.

He came in, and she fell sobbing on his breast. She began to speak, but he interrupted her.

"Yes, yes, you have nothing more to be frightened about." Then he told her plainly and shortly that John Kurt was dead. "They are now at the steps, with the body."

Partly from her father, partly at a later time from other people, she learned that John Kurt had eaten and drunk heavily at dinner, becoming more and more excited. On leaving the table he swore by life and death that he would go to a disreputable house. That would be such devilish good fun for Tomasine. They tried to control him, but he became perfectly beside himself, staggered forward, and fell dead.

No floral temple was built on the steps for John Kurt to be laid in.

## CHAPTER VI.

## FIRST RESULTS, AND THOSE THAT FOLLOWED.

IN the days that followed, several friends, both of Tomasine and of her mother, came to express their sympathy and offer help, but she refused to see any one.

During all that afternoon when she had sat locked in her room, robbed of her clothes, her youth, her self-respect, trembling for her life, she had called to mind that at that moment John Kurt was sitting at table in the best society of the town. If society had not approved John Kurt, she would never, inexperienced girl that she was, have been sitting there. Society had surrendered her to him. Yes, surrender, that was the word ; and yet, if she were not mistaken, every one was fond of her and respected her. She would never see them again. If she had been free, she would have left the country. Her own fault? She saw it, saw it. She would never show her face again.

*Now* she was free ! But something fresh bound her. A terrible uncertainty. Was she *enceinte*, or was she not? Would she perhaps bring another insane being into the world? For now that John was gone, she wished to think that he had been mad, like several of his family. Would she give birth to a child whose nature might combine any possibilities, and afterwards be bound to it for the rest of her life, because those people down in the town had surrendered her, and she had not understood herself?

In the course of a few weeks she became the shadow of her former self.

It was wonderful, almost as soon as uncertainty changed to the certainty that she was to become a mother, a feeling of solemnity came with the decision she formed ; she did not understand how it was that she had not discovered so clear, so natural a thing before. The being under her bosom should determine the question ; if it were a miserable little wretch everything would be at an end, she would not live to nourish such a brat ; but if the child combined the qualities of her own honourable race with what was best in his, it would be a great, great boon that she was left alone with it. At all events, she must wait to see.

Tomasine was awakened, and from this time a natural grandeur began to develop itself in her. She had borne both the actual and mental struggles alone, alone she regulated her own character. It required time, for her thoughts did not move quickly. She ate, rested, and regained all her vigour. So finally everything was prepared. She first called in the head gardener, a handsome, fair man, with a determined manner and great powers of self-reliance. He was no other than Andreas Berg, whose Sunday jacket John Kurt had cut to pieces. He had remained on "The Estate" ever since. Andreas Berg had borne everything with the hasty-tempered old Kurt, who would undoubtedly have made him his heir, if his son had not returned. In later times he had put up with all John's freaks, and bursts of passion.

Tomasine asked him to sit down. She inquired if he had any other intention, than to stay with her.

"No, he wished to stay, if Fru Kurt would allow him."

She could depend on him, then?

"Yes, that she could."

The first thing she had to ask him was not to cail her Fru Kurt any longer, but Fru Rendalen, and to get the others to do the same. Their eyes met. Hers shone uncertainly behind her spectacles; his in wide open astonishment. But when he saw that her glasses were gradually dimmed by the tears, which could not find a free course, and that her flat nose worked until the spectacles slipped down on to her cheek, he hastened to say, "Very good. That shall be done."

She took off her glasses, wiped her eyes first, and then afterwards, and began, after a pause, with the next question.

"Dear Berg," she said, and put on her glasses, "could you not, quite quietly, so that no one would notice, have all these portraits destroyed—indeed, all the pictures, for I cannot always distinguish them? Have them all burnt, or disposed of in some way, so that they do not remain here, and as soon as you can manage it. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Frue, but . . ."

"What do you mean?"

"It would be rather difficult if no one is to see."

She considered for a while.

"Even if it is noticed, it may be done all the same, Berg."

"Very good. Then of course it shall be done."

And done it was, with an infernal smell of burnt canvas and burnt leather, and a general smell of burning. A soft breeze drove it one afternoon all over the town, the smoke drifting almost to the works, out by the river-banks. She then invited her father, with all his family, to come up to her. That was done at once. She handed over all the house-keeping to old Mariane, and let her have what help she wanted. The rest of the family lived in the rooms behind her own.

Soon afterwards an advertisement appeared in the local paper:

FRU TOMASINE RENDALEN

*Will resume her Instructions in English, French, and German.  
Information to be obtained at "The Estate."*

She changed her name with all legal formalities. Besides her classes, of which she had as many as she wished, she studied book-keeping, and soon herself began to keep the accounts of the house, garden, and dairy. At the same time she began to learn a little about the working of the business, the accounts of which she kept. She wished to qualify herself to undertake it. Perhaps she would never have to do so, but it gave her present occupation. It left no time for brooding; that was the main thing. She was so tired every evening, that she slept the moment her head was on the pillow, and, like all thoroughly healthy people, she was wide awake directly she opened her eyes, and was into her bath the next instant.

Notwithstanding this, as time went on, the more oppressive became the secret thoughts which were ever present to her mind. She had cleared away every trace of the Kurt family, she had surrounded herself with her own. Every time that a thought of the former presented itself to her mind, she met it with some thought of the latter. She knew nothing of her mother's family, but as a child she had been in Rendalen, and there seen her father's relations, and listened to their sagas. There was nothing remarkable about them. The family disposition, even and rather heavy, had every now and then, after a too long period of general respect, or when pressed to the uttermost, come out into something uncommon, but otherwise they were an orderly race, toiling

on with quiet perseverance. But everything she knew about them, appearance as well as disposition, she placed in opposition to all which could come from the side of the Kurts. The Kurts were dark, the Rendalens essentially fair; fair in hair and complexion, fair and open in disposition. She had such practice in moving pictures in and out of her mind, that the very moment a Kurt memory intruded, it was driven away by a commanding fair Rendalen without eyebrows. The result was, that dark or light became a sort of finality with her. The outward appearance was a sign of the inward disposition; the first sight of her child, therefore, might well determine her life. Her whole anxiety centred itself upon that first moment.

The nearer the great moment came, the more her dread increased. Her ordinary occupations no longer sufficed to deaden it. She dismissed her pupils and took part in the work, both in the house and out of doors. The spring was late that year, and in her ardour she let herself take cold; she struggled against it as long as she could, but at last she was obliged to keep indoors, and take to her bed. And now her anxiety so entirely got the better of her that she fancied, before the time, that the birth-pains were upon her, and became absolutely light-headed.

She again began the struggle with John Kurt, and even when, completely exhausted, her mind became clear, her anxiety by no means subsided. The first sight of the child would be enough, and in her distress and desperation she came to believe that dark or light hair would be decisive. "If it is dark," she thought, "I am doomed—I shall be unable to bend the child. And it *will* be dark, the Kurt race is so strong. Its fierce strength has already impressed itself too deeply upon me, its fancies overshadow me. I cannot even think as I will."

She tried to gain comfort from the answering thought that old Konrad Kurt had been worthy. "There are good qualities in the Kurt family; seeds of good which perhaps will grow again in the child which will be born. Even if the good be not unmixed—I do not ask so much—but if it may be the stronger." She prayed for it—ah! how she prayed!—until she remembered that it was too late—it had been decided long ago. She constantly saw the back of a neck brooding over her—the neck in the picture of the

first Kurt. She used her old power, to call up images of her own people against it, but the fair race would not shine. The neck remained. It had no right to be there, it was no longer in the Kurt family; neither Konrad Kurt had it, nor John.

"Take away that neck," she cried to those near her. And with the sound of "Away, take it away," new fancies shaped themselves around her. John Kurt appeared, to tell her that he would never go away. She would never, by all the devils, get rid of him. His white forehead gleamed, and he swore till nothing but r-r-r-r thrilled and drummed close up beside her cheek.

To such a degree was she exhausted by this inward struggle, that it was a relief when the birth-pains began in reality, imperiously commanding all else to stand aside.

All fever had left her, and she bravely gathered her strength together, but it was less than any one supposed. Therefore it was a long time before she heard a feeble cry, and "A son, Frue, you have a son;" and afterwards, gently and kindly, "Tomasine, you have a son."

A gentle peace had filled her. It was soon broken. She collected her thoughts at the word "son"—she had a son. The wave of peace broke against a wave of dread. "His hair?" she contrived to whisper. She could not say more. "Red, Frue." She had a dim idea that that might be either dark or light, perhaps more likely dark. It was not clear—it was—— And everything passed away from her.

For some time those near did not notice her. No one imagined that this powerful woman could be fainting, and therefore some time elapsed before she was brought round, and there was some alarm. It was only by degrees that she realised what had happened—what the whimpering was she heard somewhere—why she had a remembrance of pain. The child was now clothed, and they lifted it up to her, but still not near enough. She could not see it properly. She wished to sign to them to bring it nearer, but it was difficult; she could neither do it with her voice, nor by moving her head, and she did not think of her hand, or perhaps she could not move it. But some one was there who understood, and held the baby up to her, so that it touched her cheek, just where she had felt its father's breath. She felt something soft, something warm, something delicate, the

softest thing she had ever touched. She heard a cluck, a whimper, and now she saw—the eyebrows, they were her own, her family's light sparse bristles.

It was too much joy, too much happiness. Her blood circulated more quickly, and soon the warmth came to her cheeks, the tears to her eyes. She lay there weeping quietly, while her little one was held fast to her motherly breast.

With God's help, she would try to accomplish the rest.





### III

## A LECTURE



## CHAPTER I.

### DETHRONED.

FRU TOMASINE RENDALEN herself carried the child to the font, and gave him her own name.

Little Tomas's cradle stood by the side of the bed in which she slept. The room was both her reading and working room. The other remained vacant as though only for show. Through her friends in England, France, and Germany she obtained books in three languages on the bringing up of children. But she soon laid them aside; they were all either too vague, or too dogmatic. She began to widen her acquirements in other respects. She wished to be his teacher in everything. But, from the time that he was six months old her work was much interrupted, for he was a most restless child. The doctor assured her that, so far as he could see, the boy ailed nothing. He did not scream from pain. If, at the moment he opened his eyes, for example, the person he wanted was not there—that is to say, the one who could give him food—he not only screamed till she came, which was to be expected, but after she had come and had forced him to drink, he screamed while the milk ran out of his mouth, and continued to give blows, slaps, and spiteful cries. He could not forget. If there were anything he did not like, he screamed himself black in the face, and made himself rigid. Sometimes it seemed to Tomasine as though she had a log on her lap, and not a human being. When he was nine months old, she was obliged to give up nursing him, for he kept her in such a state of irritation and terror, that his health became affected through her. The struggle which ensued on this, was terrible. It lasted altogether for three days and nights,

during which time he could only be induced to touch a drop of the strange food by artifice.

As Tomasine hung about in the outer room, or in the passage, listening to the hoarse screams, for he had no voice left—not allowed to see him, or go to his help—she remembered more than once, with shame, what she had thought and determined before he was born. The boy cried inside, the mother outside, and no one could get her away. And this, his first great fight in the world, to keep possession of his mother's breast, had no happy influence upon him, for from that time he tried, more than ever, to get everything by screaming.

Tomasine was a strong, long-suffering woman, but she became thin and nervous. She hoped that things would improve as he grew bigger, and waited till he should be a year old; but still had to wait, for the stronger he grew the more persistently he screamed. Some new method must be adopted. The specialists did not touch on this, or else she had not understood them. She consulted experienced people, and was advised to keep him continually amused. That answered for a while. He was quiet when he saw anything new, but he would not look at the same thing more than twice at the outside. If she forgot this, he became so furious that the very newest thing in the world would not pacify him. Some one else advised her to let the child scream as much as he liked. Eternal Powers, how he yelled! If he had been chosen as the representative of all the sorrow and trouble in the town he could not have done better. "No," thought Tomasine, "that will torture the life out of both him and me." So she turned to the exactly opposite course, and tried to guess his thoughts before he had formed them, and indulged him in everything. This helped, but if she guessed wrong, there was no use in guessing right afterwards.

At last his maternal retainer and slave, like many before her, was brought to such a state of distress and despair, that she determined to revolt. The little despot must be dethroned. The revolution broke out with six slaps on his little person. All the horrors of a civil war at once showed themselves. But six, seven, eight to twelve slaps followed. To give up one's power before one's life, is hard even for a not-two-years-old tyrant, so the battle lasted several

hours until—he gave in? No, that he would not do, but he fell asleep.

Tomasine was so worn out by months of worry, anxiety, and sleepless nights, and finally by the fight itself, that she was trembling and bathed in perspiration. She stood over him as he slept, as David is said to have stood over Saul. She grieved for his fallen greatness. She heard him sob as he lay there in his helplessness. She saw the last tear dry on his cheek, the convulsive movements of his chubby hands, and the twitching of the thin skin of his head. Who should be good to him if not she? How she longed for his waking, that she might let him see her face with its gentlest expression, and caress him, and practise all those small arts which are the delight of every mother! More than all, she longed to make him screw up his mouth for a kiss. When he did that, he was irresistible.

At last he began to move and to rub his hand over his nose. In her impatience she put her hands under him, and laid her face down to his head, to breathe the warm fragrance from it.

He screwed up his mouth for a grimace; despair rose darker and darker in his eyes, and at last he gave a shriek, a frightful and frightening shriek, while he thrust himself away from her, with hands, head, and body.

She was obliged hastily to let go of him, and call her sister. To her, the little arms were raised at once, and he pressed himself closely to her, so as to be thoroughly safe.

The forsaken mother stood and looked on. She felt as though she had been driven round the whole compass, and was now at the same point from which she had started some months before. Her first feeling was one of miserable helplessness, then came a strong sense of shame, and suddenly she snatched the boy away from her sister, and dressed him herself, whether he would or no.

He screamed the whole time, and when he was dressed, and would not take food from her, a perfect hail of slaps and rain of scolding ensued, nor did she leave off till he really struggled to be quiet; checking the sound so suddenly that he gasped for breath as though he were choking. By degrees the rebellion was reduced to subdued sounds strongly restrained; whenever they broke out again they were forced back. At last he showed that he was entirely subdued by

screwing up his mouth for a kiss, to prove to her that it really was against his will if a cry every now and then escaped him. It was comically touching. He was finally forced to eat, and, now completely mastered, he sobbed himself to sleep.

Tomasine went out for a walk, and on her return sat once more, anxiously waiting for his awakening. He had hardly opened his eyes, and seen her, before there were threatenings of a prolonged howl, but he restrained it from fear; nay, he even held out his hands to her as she stood smiling over him. There have been many more fortunate conquerors, both before and since the time, when Fru Tomasine Rendalen deposed her son, and seated herself on his throne. Besides which, the pleasure was diminished by the knowledge that she should have done this at first, long, long ago; but all the same she was just as delighted with her tardy victory, as any general could have been with a more timely one, and as she lay down that night, she was as weary and as confident as the conqueror of a city.

At that time Tomas was a year and nine months old. She thoroughly understood that this struggle would not be the last, but with that knowledge came the conviction that in the uncertain voyaging through which his whims had led him, he had discovered his mother. From that time forward she would be his mainland. She soon obtained a proof of this. Whether it were in the intoxication of victory that she began to wear a cap, or whether it were a long-nourished plan for concealing the hair which had always annoyed her, and putting something visible in its place, the fact remains that the cap first appeared at this time. The boy must and would have it off. For his sake she had temporarily offered up her spectacles, against which he had also waged war. But she would not sacrifice her cap. Now many people are content to lose the realities of power, but cannot bear to be deprived of its symbols; and to be able to lord it over his mother's hair and head was a great, a strong proof of power, which he would not give up.

And so a fight ensued, but he yielded before things had reached a climax. His little hands were pushed back time after time, and always with more force, notwithstanding his screams, till suddenly he flung himself on her neck, and the little war ended charmingly.

She was a happy mother as she looked forward to his second birthday. An English friend, with whom she exchanged letters from time to time, since she no longer visited in the town, had sent her, for this great day, Charles Dickens' "David Copperfield," at that time the most popular novel in England. The book came a day too soon. She read a great deal of it at once, and all the life-like forms gathered themselves round little Tomas for his own day, when he was to be dressed in new clothes from top to toe. She dreamt of little Em'ly and little Tomas. She woke on his birthday morning a little earlier than he. He was lying quite still. He had not disturbed her the whole night, a thing which did not happen once in two months. Proud and happy, she gave him his birthday greeting. The first hours passed in unbroken delight. At nine o'clock he was sitting on the floor of the parlour, dressed in his new clothes and surrounded by all the toys which she and her family had given him. She herself sat by the window, dressed in her best, reading "David Copperfield." She had tried having the window open, to enjoy the fresh air, but the spring day was rather cold.

After a time she was called into the kitchen. He never liked her to leave him, but he was so occupied at that moment, that she thought she might venture, though she took the precaution of going through the bedroom and across the hall into the kitchen. She left the kitchen-door open, for fear he should think her too long gone, and begin to call for her.

In the parlour all remained quiet, suspiciously quiet. He had in fact closely observed the book that his mother was reading, for, according to the English fashion, it had a bright-coloured binding, with a picture on it.

He noticed that she put it down on the table, and felt that he too should like to read a little of it, if he could do so without interruption. He dropped his toys as soon as ever he was alone, got up, and toddled off, pushed a stool forward, when he found he could not reach up, pulled the book on to the floor, and sat himself down beside it.

Some time elapsed before he again learnt, as he had done previously, but had forgotten, that it is not easy to read a number of pages at once, but, on the contrary, one should take them one or two at a time; that did very well. Then



he tore them out of the book, they were so much easier to read in that way.

After the first one or two, he took them out several at a time, twenty in all, before his mother returned. They soon had a difference of opinion over this style of reading. She lost her temper, and took the book hastily from him, telling him sharply, that he knew quite well that he ought not to touch her books. He was frightened at first, but after a while he stretched out both his hands and said, "Me book, mama, me book."

She naturally took no notice of him, so he came up to her and repeated very coaxingly, "Me book, mama, me book." "No," she answered sharply, for unluckily the book had been shamefully treated, just at the place where she was reading. He waited a little, but began again, "Me book, mama, me book." She remembered that it was his birthday, and answered him more gently, showing him what harm he had done. He listened and answered, "Me book, mama, me book."

Some sweets were lying there ; she gave him some, which he ate up, saying, as he did so, "Me book, mama, me book." She laid the book aside, took him up, and danced round with him, then set him down among his toys, and went back to smooth out the crumpled leaves. He was soon by her side again, reaching up to the table with one hand, while he steadied himself with the other : "Me book, mama, me book." Once more she left her occupation, and fetched his outdoor things in order to go out with him.

This he would not have on any terms. He made himself as stiff as a poker, but she was determined that out he should go. They remained in the garden for an hour, and he amused himself while he was there.

While she was taking off his things again in the parlour, he stretched his disengaged hand towards the table : "Me book, mama, me book," saying it with the most coaxing tone and look of which he was capable. She thought it the best way to appear deaf to it, and gave herself up to cutting bits of paper, in order to gum them over the torn leaves. It was slow work, and all the time he stood, and begged, and prayed, giving little stamps, and stretching himself up : "Me book, mama, me book."

"He will stop some time," she thought, but he was still persevering when she had accomplished her task.

She was very anxious to leave his society for that of the characters in the book, who were certainly much more amusing, but she did not wish to be cross, and so began to play the flute—that is to say, she moved her fingers as though she were playing a piccolo, whistling at the same time; a performance in which she had a good deal of practice.

He pulled and dragged at her dress, and she replied with her flute. She became quite merry over it, and her merriment increased when he became angry, and called out "No, no," to her playing, and cried, and hit her. The flute-playing became much quicker; he would not leave off, nor would she; the spirits of the Kurts were in every chink and corner. Then the child threw himself down on his back on the floor, drumming with his heels and screaming in good earnest. She played on, but more softly, for she felt that it was actually he who had won, while she was teasing him.

She could not take up the old fight again at once. In one moment the flute-playing changed to crying—hopeless, inconsolable crying. The boy, who in the midst of his anger, had kept a sharp watch on her, was so astonished that he forgot to scream. She had been suddenly seized by her old dread, and neither saw nor heard anything, till she felt something warm against one of her hands. She had let it hang as she flung herself backward in her misery, raising the other to her face. She lifted her head, and looked into a wondering face, the tear-stained face of her own red-haired boy. As soon as he saw her look at him, he put up his lips for a kiss, stretching out his hands to her. So the little flat nose was lifted up to the big one, and she murmured, and prattled, and fondled him, all over his face and head, as he held his arms round her neck. She did not take the book again. She kept him instead, and he never once looked towards the table where it lay. That was their last great struggle. There were a thousand lesser ones, of course, but never one which lasted more than a few minutes.

places, where they were so narrow that two turnips could hardly grow side by side. Rank odours of all sorts, sometimes pleasantly modified by the smell of tar, hung over the whole mountain, rising and spreading as a rich offering up into the Sabbath sky—all according to the ordinary customs in that part of the world.

The noise of the children down by the sea came ringing up the hillside like a constant chime, now and then broken by a cry. A cock crowed; a dog on board one of the ships in the harbour barked at a passing boat, and was answered by some shaggy comrade on the mountain. Otherwise all was still; they only heard their own steps crunching on the gravel, and, as they got higher up, something like the frantic screaming of a child.

Tomasine looked out over the islands, and the Sound, away to the open sea—shining and still and clear under the sky. In the streets of the town a few people were walking about, and, in some places, little groups of children. But it was too far off for any sound to mingle with the shouts of those below.

To the right lay "The Estate," the first column of smoke, just curling from the kitchen chimney; all round here the chimneys had been smoking for a long time, and a little smoke hung here and there over the town.

The day was warm. They toiled, perspiring, up the mountain-side, and she thought of those who, after a day's hard work, had every evening to climb these twenty, thirty, or even fifty stages for supper, wood chopping, and bed.

She did not meet a single person, though she saw several, mostly old men, sitting before the doors with their pipes. The working men generally slept till dinner time on Sundays, and the women were all by the kitchen fires. Here and there an idle lass might be seen, sitting on a step, chatting to a girl-friend who had most likely come up to join in the evening's amusements. Or perhaps a young sailor, who, with his pipe in his mouth, and his hands in his pockets, leant over a wall talking to a girl who stood shyly before him.

Little more than half-way up they came upon a party of lads and girls who lay or sat round a large flat stone. There was no noise or talking; Tomasine did not know they were there, until she was close upon them. They were in the

very worst of the smells, but that did not seem to affect them. What could they be engaged in? There was nothing to show it. She inquired the way, and one or two half rose, while one, who was older, answered her, pointing to a red house with white painted window-frames.

Tomasine had just wiped her spectacles and she could see the house, but she also saw distinctly by their manner that they all knew her, and every one guessed just what she wanted at Mother Stöa's. No one said anything, but she heard a little tittering and whispering when she had gone by.

She asked Berg what they could be doing, since they were all so quiet; and he replied that he believed that the boys were playing cards, and the girls looking on, but that, as it was at the time of the Sunday sermon, they hid the cards away if a stranger went by. She began to reflect on the difference between the working people in a little Norwegian town and those of a large foreign city, raising thereby many old memories. But something occupied her along with her thinking, a disagreeable something which would not leave off. What was that? Yes, it was the same frantic screaming from up the hill. Now that she came nearer, she recognised it, and it brought a painful feeling with it. It was her son's old, spiteful scream. There was no doubt of it—the same to such a degree in tone of voice, in description, and vigour, that it tortured and stabbed her. Could it be his sister who was up there scoffing at her? She had been hot before, and now she was in a glow; some of the old dread seized upon her, bewildering thoughts from the old days, of struggles with her son. But, "Frue, you are going too fast," called Andreas Berg from lower down the hill; she could hardly see him, her glasses were dim; she took them off and wiped them, and her eyes as well, drew a long breath and began to laugh. Berg came up slowly. The child's crying continued, but now that she had recovered her senses, she noticed that it came from the right, while she could see Marit Stöen's house, the red one with white window-frames, almost exactly before her on the slope to the left; it was the largest house up there, and undoubtedly the one she had seen, she could not be mistaken; she felt quite light-hearted as she walked towards it.

They could not go straight to it, but were obliged to make a circuit and come back along Marit Stöen's garden

fence, which had also been painted, though evidently not so recently.

The two windows of the house looked out towards the garden, and there was an extensive view from them, but the door was in the end wall to the left, to which a porch had been added, with a few steps leading up to it. All was quiet here, inside and out, but the jubilant voices of the little ones below, and the screams of the angry child from the other side, further away, met in the air.

The garden, along which they passed, was the largest they had seen on the mountain, though certainly neither it, nor the house, were what one would call well kept. But there was comfort, or whatever one might call it: Tomasine hesitated for the right word. She now saw a child with dark hair and bright, wondering eyes, who got up from the steps, letting something fall from her lap, as she ran quickly into the house-place. Immediately afterwards there appeared a tall elderly woman, with dark untidy hair, and a handsome and intelligent, though rather dirty face. The woman at once recognised Tomasine, who now came up the steps and entered the porch.

"Have you come to see us, Frue?" she asked, smiling.

Tomasine was again busy with her eternal spectacles, and when she put them on again, the woman had tidied up the place as well as she could, with the little girl clinging with both hands to her skirt, so that, however the woman turned, the child was hidden from the strange lady. Andreas Berg remained outside. Marit Stöen apologised for her untidy room, with a pleasant voice and simple skill. It was getting on to dinner-time, she said, and everything certainly ought to be very different. But there had been a dance there the evening before. They like to keep it up a long time, you see. She would still less like to ask the lady to come into the parlour, for it was even worse, she said, laughing. It was by no means a small sum that she made by letting the room, and by the coffee she sold. Her room was the largest on that side; for the mountain was divided in two as it were. "The people here will have nothing to do with those on the other side." And she laughed again.

Tomasine Rendalen had taken a seat, but when she began to look round the room, she found that the spectacles must come off again. She was warmer than she had supposed.

As she took them off, she asked after the child's mother. The woman replied that Petrea was married.

"Married!"

"Yes, to a mate of the name of Aslaksen. He was a smart, clever fellow, and he would have her. They did not live here any longer," she said, and proceeded to explain their circumstances in detail. "Aslaksen would soon get a ship."

The child peeped now and again from behind her grandmother's skirts, and each time Tomasine glanced towards her. She had a shock of dark hair like her grandmother's, and in other respects was a blending of John Kurt and the woman standing before her—a blending which, she could not deny it, gave her a feeling of aversion. And yet the little thing was pretty. She had undoubtedly Kurt's wild eyes, but there was laughter in them as well as wildness.

"So the child remains with you?" said Tomasine, pointing with her parasol to where she was hiding.

"The child, yes, she's all right," answered the grandmother, while she patted her grandchild's head. "John Kurt, he paid for Petrea, as soon as ever she had her misfortune. And had a christening, so grand as you would hardly believe, and along a' that, he gives her a savings-bank book with a hundred specie-daler in it, and his father gave her another on top of it with just as much in it again." And Marit Støen began to cry from sheer gratitude, because John Kurt had given two hundred daler to his own child.

Up to that time Tomasine had had no idea of this. "Have you any of the money left?" she asked.

"I should think we have some of it left," laughed Marit; "why that is a likely idea that the little 'un could want it all." She laughed, and again took hold of the child's curly head, and drew it towards her. But the little one slipped back again directly.

"Is she not very much in the way, now you are alone and have to work?"

"Oh! as for that, no. We are not so particular as all that comes to. She sits herself away somewhere;" and she turned half round, laughing, towards the child behind her.

"Is she easy to manage—not passionate?"

"Oh! not so bad," laughed Marit; "and she's so comical as well, poor little thing." And she now forcibly pulled her

forward, the child still struggling against her. "Now, now, don't be such a silly."

Tomasine, however, did not wish to come into close contact with the child. So she got up, and looked round the house-place. The hearth was in the corner of the inner room; close by the window stood the table, with the remains of breakfast on it; a coffee-cup and a milk-bowl, with the dregs still in them.

On the wall opposite, and also on that between the fire-place and the door, hung some daguerreotypes, and two or three pictures were nailed up as well. The daguerreotypes, of course, represented Aslaksen and Petrea. Fru Rendalen passed these without looking at them. The pictures were, one a large ship in full sail, the others, the new Emperor and Empress of the French. As Tomasine had never seen any likeness of the latter she went up to them. The Emperor, who had a large nose, looked about twenty-four; the Empress was but lightly clad, though she looked all the same a very innocent little girl of hardly sixteen. "They are only the sort o' things they carry about to sell," explained Marit. "I thought it would be amusing like to have her. She was not born to it, nor, for the matter of that, was he."

Tomasine was now opposite the open door. "Good gracious!" she exclaimed, "what child can that be who is always screaming?"

Marit laughed. "Oh! that's Lars Tobiassen's boy, that is."

"He never does anything else but scream," was suddenly heard from the little girl behind her grandmother's gown. She came forward in her excitement. Then, frightened at the sound of her own voice, she hid her head again.

"Perhaps the lady knows Lars Tobiassen?" inquired Marit.

Tomasine noticed something in her voice. "No, what is he?"

"It is rather a difficult job to say, that," answered Marit. "He's such a lot of things. He's a hard drinker, he is. He's turned butcher lately, for they say as drinking won't do no harm in that business. Have you never seen him?"

"No, why do you ask me?"

"Ah, I don't hardly like to say anything about it," and she laughed rather slyly.

"But why not?"

"Well, I only says what others says to me. It was not I as found it out;" and she laughed again.

"What is said, then?"

"Well, folk do say that he's a Kurt too. Not any of them last ones, but a bit further back."

She saw this made some impression on Tomasine, and hastily added, "Like enough, it's nought but talk. He's like no Kurt that ever I saw. He's a rare fighter, he is."

"Some of the Kurts have been that too," answered Tomasine, by way of saying something; and she turned to the window and looked out.

"Yes, I've heard that," answered Marit; "there are two sorts of 'em. Some fat and dark, and others just as thin; but they have always been good-natured, the most of 'em. Folk can say what they will, but to the poor people . . . ." Her hand sought the child.

Tomasine turned at the moment and beckoned to Marit. Through the window they could see a number of people beyond the garden-fence. Andreas Berg was there as well, talking to some of them, perhaps to keep them there, and prevent them from coming to the door. They were mostly young. Now she saw that they were the same whom she had passed down below, sitting round the flat stone; a few others might perhaps have joined them. They all stood staring up at the window.

"My, what a lot there are!" cried Marit.

"Do you see that ragged boy, with the fair curly hair?" asked Tomasine.

"Yes, he is easy enough to see," and Marit's voice showed that she understood what Tomasine wished to know. "He is the son of young Consul Fürst, and like enough to his father." It was true. That curly hair, those blue eyes, recalled the partner of many a dance. Tomasine blushed crimson. "Why, my gracious, and you did not know before Frue? Well, it's my turn to ask you something now," she continued. "Do you know that lass over there, as is holding her petticoat on with her hand? She has pulled off the string, poor thing. Her, without much more on than her shift. Her with hair as is neither yellow nor red, and a ridiculous white skin. Dear me, *that* one over there. Can't you really see who she is?" Yes, Tomasine had done so



long ago; she had had plenty of practice in the foreign schools in recognising parents by their children, and children by their parents. "Yes, she's Fröken Engel right enough, if any one chose to call her so," laughed Marit, "though she's not dressed in silks." Tomasine drew back from the window.

Again Marit laughed, though this time not altogether without malice. "One sees the wrong side of the world up here on the mountain." Tomasine hastened to say that she had thought of giving the child sixty daler a year. Here was the first thirty for the past six months. If Marit needed any more help, she must come and tell her. When the child was bigger, they would talk of what was further to be done with her. Marit stood with the money in her hand: "That really was something, far more than any one could expect; if everybody behaved like that when any one had a misfortune . . . ." And she began to cry again.

In the meantime the child had let go the dress, rousing up when she heard that there were people outside in the garden. She had sidled right into the porch. She now came rushing in again, while loud laughter from outside rang through the house. The little girl only said "Lars Tobiassen," seized her grandmother's dress with both her hands, and huddled it round her. Tomasine, frightened lest he should be coming in, went hurriedly to the door without even saying good-bye, tying her bonnet strings, which she had loosened, as she went. In so doing she nearly fell, and had a narrow escape of descending the steps quicker than she had intended. But Lars Tobiassen had just passed. The laughter seemed to have burst out as he clambered up the steps to the right. He was roaring drunk.

Tomasine came out just as, with his back towards her, he had surmounted the first obstacle. She noticed his close-cropped neck. Where had she seen that bronze bull-neck before, and the point of hair in the middle? Oh! Heavens, that fearful neck which had hung over her, the night her child was born. The eldest Kurt's neck: that was it. And the bull-necked man now called out, "Now just you wait—devil take you! I'll give you something to scream for, I will." Tomasine was down the steps, out of the garden, through the crowd; she would not hear that swearing again, nor the sound of blows, and not, oh! not that half-insane

screaming. She rather flew than walked through the people, who made way for her. But barely sufficient, so that she jostled against several of them, and when the descent began, she sprang from step to step, fancying she heard laughter behind her, but only running on the faster. She was fit to drop, but would not give in. Notwithstanding all her efforts, she could hear behind her the incessant terrified cries of the child, the drunken voice, and a woman's passionate scream. Dogs woke up and barked, but not near enough to drown the shriek, that fearful shriek, until, thank God, the bells from the two churches in the town began to ring at the same moment, filling the whole air with their clangour. She had come to the flat stone where the young people had been. It was deserted now; she sank down on it, and burst into tears. At last Andreas Berg came after her. His dignified pace made her feel that she had behaved somewhat strangely. She dare not wait till he got up with her, but without looking round she walked on. Her knees trembled, but she would no longer allow herself to be hunted by phantoms. The blessed church-bells saved her from hearing anything else, and they continued till she was right down at the bottom. The children were no longer there. It was dinner-time.

A quarter of an hour later she was sitting with her little boy in her lap. He was very much puzzled by her excitement and tears, assuring her eagerly that he had been "dood" the whole time. She thanked him for it over and over again, with caresses, hugs, and kisses, but cried all the more. Now she began to feel how bad it had been of her never to lay her hand on his little sister's head, although she had been "dood" too.

The boy's playthings lay strewn around him. She remembered the bit of firewood, with an apron round it, which his little sister had let fall when she ran frightened away from the door-step. Tomasine had noticed it, for she almost fell over it as she hurried away. But nothing had melted her. Yet the child could not help having the same father! No, it was Tomasine who had not been "dood" that morning.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE CHILD.

THE first result of this visit was that Tomasine felt she must have some one to talk to, for there were other bad inheritances in the world beside the Kurts'. She must gain further knowledge. Without hesitation she chose the man for whom she had the greatest respect, "Old Green."

Now as surely as the afternoon came old Green passed by. The way he took was along the garden, on the right, where the road used to run, and where a path still led up to the woods. This walk among the hills and woods was Dean Green's favourite one. Tomasine began to watch for him, but lately he had hardly ever been alone. Nils Hansen, the shoemaker, was generally with him, the greatest character in the town, and married to a lady whom Tomasine had known abroad, and who had been one of her friends.

One day, as Tomasine had stationed herself at the gate, to watch if the Dean were alone, she heard him and Hansen far down the slope. Mormonism was beginning at this time to be made known in the North by its first emissaries. The newspapers constantly contained something about this new teaching. Nils Hansen was talking loudly. "Mormonism," he said, "we are as good Mormons here as in America. How many wives has a man before he is married in church, and afterwards as well? The merchants are the worst, but there are others beside."

They had drawn nearer before the Dean answered. "Look you, Hansen. I take it for granted that the races which have attained to monogamy, actual monogamy . . ."

"And what sort of thing may that be?"

The Dean stood still. "It means having one wife. Polygamy is having several wives."

"Oh! that's it, is it."

"The races which have really and truly come to be monogamists," continued the Dean, "are but few. The most part are still polygamists." They walked on again.

Nils Hansen agreed. "Yes, that is—devil take it—my opinion as well."

The Dean : "Progress consists in this, that the disgrace . . . ." She heard no further.

"There are bad inheritances in the world beside the Kurts," thought Tomasine again. "How otherwise could he have been endured : nay, even liked? No doubt he appealed to some secret feeling in most of them."

As she had not the courage to go straight down to Dean Green, she went first to Nils Hansen's. It was generally said of Nils Hansen, that he flourished, and that in the greatest prosperity, on the hatred of the whole town. His crime consisted in his having several years before mustered the lesser townfolk in a struggle against those of more importance, or rather in the fact that he had been victorious. He had taken the town councillorship from them, seized the pews in church, so that now every one had equal rank and place there. He had had everything supervised and the financial estimates inspected, in a way that the leading people looked upon as extremely wrong. His worst villainy admittedly was, that, aided by some pecuniary help from non-residents, he had established a bank for poor people, called the penny bank, which had helped a number of the lower orders, even in some cases bringing them quite to independence ; for all the vested interests, his sharp and amusing answers were like a wireworm at the root of a tree.

It had aroused incredible merriment when a school-mistress in the town, a pretty, fair woman, with more than usual endowments, and even with the expectation of a fortune, refused several eligible offers, to engage herself to rough, rude, shoemaker Hansen. She was desperately in love with him into the bargain. She smiled and blushed if he were so much as named, and it can be imagined what it was when he himself hove in sight—one shoulder a little higher than the other, by the way—with his odd face, blinking eyes, broad shoulders, and huge hands. Endless jokes were made behind their backs, because, both while they were engaged, and afterwards when they were married, she taught Hansen, and he boasted of it. But they afterwards felt the result of this schooling, and paid for it as well. She was older than Tomasine, and had once been some months with her in England. When Tomasine returned, Fru Hansen had been married a year, and was

therefore somewhat outside the circle in which the former moved, though she often went to see her, for she was very fond of the healthy, clear-headed little housewife.

It was therefore with her that Tomasine was especially angry when it transpired what kind of man John Kurt was. Why had she not by a single word dissuaded her from taking him? After his death Laura Hansen had tried to have some talk with Tomasine, but in vain. But now the latter thought, "Perhaps most wives have something to complain of, and yet this does not prevent girls from marrying; so why should I have expected them to advise me to act differently from what they would have done themselves?" So she went down to Laura Hansen.

They lived in a small, old house on the market-place, next door to Fürst's. The queer building, with a narrow alley on one side and a large door leading to the rambling courtyard on the other, was the inheritance which Laura had expected, and now possessed. She was a slender but well-grown woman, with an open countenance. Some people considered her sullen, some thought her shy: that depended very much on what was passing. By some she was called talkative, by others sparing of her words. She took both people and circumstances into consideration. The friends had not met for five years. Laura sat sewing in the room behind the shop, the one with the window towards the alley. She rose, astonished, flushed, and somewhat agitated. Tomasine was really once more in her house. They were both a little stiff at first. A little dark-haired, thick-set girl sat on a stool learning to sew. She looked solemnly up at them, but was soon sent out of the room. Her mother understood at once that they two, friends of old days, must be alone, and make it up together. And they did so.

After several introductory remarks, Tomasine laid her complaint against Laura and her other friends, considerately, but still clearly.

Laura answered: "When a girl does not allow herself to be hindered by the kind of life that John Kurt led, there is no use in any one else talking to her about it." Laura, for her part, had refused several men just because their conduct in that particular had been doubtful, or more than doubtful. But Hansen, she knew, was honourable in that respect as in others.

The tall Tomasine felt very small under little Laura's steady gaze and quiet words. She fell from the position of accuser to that of accused, and her fall was no trifling one. She had felt very superior up there for several years, and a few words spoken in the course of a minute or two had laid her low. She did not feel much respect for her own powers ; nay, for a moment, it made her unhappy to think how short-sighted she had been. She actually felt anxious to discover if she were equally stupid in other things, but she soon so far regained her balance as to understand that to look only at one side of things may be partly the fault of circumstances.

She sat there without speaking, without listening ; she had fallen into a reverie. Laura took the opportunity of leaving the room to prepare some chocolate, and to ask her husband to take her place while she was away. This, however, he had not time for at the moment, but still he was so pleased that Tomasine had come again, that he felt he must just put his head in at the door to say so. He had on his leather apron, and held a shoemaker's stirrup in his left hand. Tomasine rose to grasp the other, but he waved her back, laughing. It was not fit to touch. "I only wanted to say many, many 'good days' to an old friend," he said after his fashion, as he drew back. But at that moment little Augusta came in again from the shop. She heard her father. He popped his head in again. "Just look at her. I always say that a dark person ought to marry a fair one. That is just what our two young ones are." And he shut the door.

Augusta was unusually tall and strong for her age. She was a full year older than Tomas. When Tomasine called her and spoke to her, the child surprised her.

There was a serenity in her eyes and brow, and a quietness in her way of talking, more like a grown person than a child. She was a contrast to Tomasine's own nervous little "Red-head," who never asked three questions about the same thing—a most pleasant contrast both outwardly and inwardly. Little Augusta went on questioning until the subject was clear to her own mind, and then would pass on to the next topic which came up.

Her hands were plump, but firm ; his, thin, freckled, restless in their very shape. Her hair was dark and unusually plentiful, notwithstanding which it made the smoothest

plaits; his stood up and stuck out in red bristles, which seemed to grow in layers; it was never tidy unless it were close cropped. He was bony and thin; she so plump, though thoroughly healthy. Tomasine recalled what she herself had been as a child. Why was not her child the same? She felt something almost like envy; to think that the little velvet jacket that Augusta wore was without a spot, though it was evidently far from new. Tomasine searched for one until it seemed to her that the whole little figure was solid soft velvet.

Her mother came in with the chocolate, and the ice being now broken, they found plenty of subjects of conversation, especially after Augusta had again been sent away.

Tomasine asked how the child had become so lovable, gentle, and sensible; and was told that she had never been headstrong. "Not even at first?" "Never, but clear-headed and staid from a tiny child."

The last thing that Tomasine wished was to say anything against her little Tomas, but the contrast was so great that somehow all that she had gone through was told, and what incessant care she had still to practise!

Laura received, during Tomasine's relation, a firm conviction that this state of things would in the long run prove too much for her, and therefore be dangerous for her health.

Accordingly they both went to Dean Green, and from that day forward the stately old gentleman, in his long-skirted coat and broad-brimmed hat, often took his way up the avenue, instead of round the garden, when he set out for his afternoon's walk. Beside this, Tomasine began, little by little, to gather her old friends about her again. Once more they strolled in the broad paths of "The Estate" garden, many of them with their children in their hands. So by degrees happiness and confidence entered into her life again, and peace as well.

For now, when Tomas's education was to begin, it was done in quite a different way from what she had imagined. He went to school—a school which she herself kept for him, and for a number of little girls, the children of her friends.

At first he thought this incredibly splendid. He was thoroughly happy, willing, even devoted; but after a while, when he heard from other boys that it was a disgrace even to go about with little girls, he wanted to know why he

should be condemned to do so. Could not his mother send them all home again and have boys there instead? He pleaded for this—he fumed, he cried; but the girls remained. If only he could make out what was the use of it all! What had he not to endure from the lads who attended the boys' public school, who had *men* for teachers. If he as much as put his head over the garden wall, he heard, "Petticoat boy!" "Mama's darling!" "The women's prince!" "Miss Freckles!" Especially the last, for he was terribly freckled, regularly speckled with red all over his face and hands, added to which he had the most hopelessly red hair. Just think of a boy being called "A Freckle," "Miss Freckle," as though he were nothing but a freckle amongst the band of girls. Goodness knows how he disdained them! If, however, he were so bold as to say so to them, and a boy with his heart in the right place is often impelled to do so, he cannot always keep his contempt concealed; well, if he did so he got a beating—a veritable, serious beating. From his mother? That would have been nothing; no, from those same wretched little girls. Some held him and half strangled him, and several more beat him. And this not as a joke. It hurt frightfully. And his mother stood there and laughed. She laughed till the tears came. She had to take off her spectacles and dry them. They would have no domineering little tyrant among them—those girls, no arrogant young master; though they were always ready, they said to him, to welcome a well-behaved little gentleman and pleasant companion. If he grimaced at them they were at him again, down with him again; it was one perpetual beating. When they had done, they curtsied to him, one after the other. There were such a number of them that it was mere fun to them. The worst, however, has not yet been told. He was desperately in love with one of the little girls. She knew it, the ungrateful little monkey, and his mother knew it as well. He was sure of that. It was principally on account of it that she had laughed so dreadfully. It was the worst of them, Augusta Hansen, Laura's daughter—Augusta, with whom he had eaten cherries. That is to say, they had taken them out of each other's mouths; first she out of his, as he held the stalk in his mouth close up to the fruit, and then he, in the same way from hers. Augusta, who had given him her sash to wear as a badge at the tournaments which



he held . . . quite alone, by the way. Augusta, to whom in return he had given his whole collection of blown eggs; he had found every one of them himself. He had been obliged to ask his mother's leave to give them away, for it could not very well have been managed without. He had come behind her to whisper in her ear, he did not wish her to look at him while he did so. His mother had asked him if he were fond of Augusta, and he had confided to her that it was especially her hair, but that she was the most good-natured of the girls, and the cleverest as well. What Augusta said was always right. His mother had agreed with him in that. She had not laughed then, but now she stood and looked on while Augusta thrashed him; for it was Augusta's hand that thumped the hardest.

After such treachery—and this did not happen only once unfortunately; it happened very often—he would not speak to Augusta for several days; once he held out for three. He tried the same with his mother, but he could never contrive to keep grave when she looked at him. She always befooled him into laughing.

He now essayed, by a more serious and regular manner of proceeding, to obtain a different adjustment of things for the future. This struggle really meant nothing more nor less than the right relationship between the sexes. Its depths he was truly far from having sounded, but his masculine instincts told him that it was all upside down, up there in the garden. Things must be altered. But there was never any "Hands off," as they say. It was Dean Green whom he suspected of being the cause of the worst of all this. Of one thing, at all events, he was certain. It was Dean Green's idea that he, like the girls, should learn to play the piano. No other boy had to strum like that. Tomas hated the long-coated parson, with his aquiline nose and bushy eyebrows, who was always about, and who smiled when he saw him. He hated him to that extent that, when he shot at a mark, he always tried to draw a picture of the Dean to shoot at, and then to hit his coat, his nose, or his eye. But, hit him as much as he would, no change took place; the piano-playing went on, the girls remained, and even if any day he brought some boys into the garden, they could never be alone—oh no! The detestable little girls were always hanging about, and then all the stories after-

wards; any little thing that a boy might have said or done was used against him; he was done for, he never came again.

And they would say, too, that Tomas had tried to show himself off before his companions, and play the grown man. He always got a beating afterwards. Sometimes they divided his offences into several portions, and he was first beaten for one and then for another. Augusta was constantly drubbing him with the greatest heartiness, without the slightest remembrance of the cherries, or the eggs, or any of his little attentions. There is no telling the number of times that he renounced his allegiance and loyalty to her, but as Augusta did not care a rush, and went about just the same, with those thick plaits and sturdy legs of hers . . . . Well, then he began to abase himself. He had to let her understand that he did not exactly disdain her, that perhaps it might be possible to obtain grace. She never seemed to notice him, and so it ended that he thought it was not worth remembering any longer.

One thing about Augusta was peculiar, she always really influenced the others without trying to do so; she let others lead as long as they liked, she acted exactly in the same way whoever led and whatever plan they hit upon; but whenever they got into difficulties it was *she* who found the way out.

Ah! how Tomas admired her, how often he told her so! and was annoyed that he could not let it alone. It was with her that he now began to take his music lessons, and from that time forth playing became his favourite occupation.

These first stormy years were followed by others, and he attained at last to such superiority, that he dared to acknowledge his comradeship with the girls. He settled down at last into accepting their help against other boys, when they challenged him from outside. Nay—who would have thought it?—the time came when he fought for his valiant girl-friends, eager for the battle; especially if one of the boys had called Augusta “Shoemaker’s lass,” or even “Sausage.” He would gladly have gone to the death for her; nor was this all boasting, for at nine years old he was severely mauled because, on this account, he would fight against ten or twelve at once, of whom three at least were older than he. That

was the proudest moment of his life, as he lay with a fresh vinegar plaster on his head, and Augusta must come in and change it instead of his mother.

Now that there really was something worth talking about—not a word.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE LAST YEARS IN THE GARDEN.

AT this time a great change took place in Tomas's external life. For the first time he had a companion.

Some years back, there had died in the town a curate named Vangen, who had married a very enthusiastic Danish lady. They had led quite an Arcadian life together—literally without thought for the morrow.

People are always very kind at times of bereavement; she managed to support her children and herself for the first few years, for those that followed there was no necessity to do so—she died.

Through Dean Green, her son Karl came to Fru Rendalen "on probation." He was at that time eleven. Karl Vangen was tall, slight, and dark, with a large head, his forehead being the most noticeable feature. He had gentle blue-grey eyes, in large sockets, a wide, straight mouth, which slowly expanded into a smile. He was quiet, and very modest, and rather uneasy in his new surroundings. When, at night, he went with Tomas into the room he now occupied, on the other side of the bath-room, he knelt down by the side of the new bed, which had been put up for him there, and prayed silently for a long time, his face buried in his hands. When he rose from his knees, he smiled across at his companion, with tears in his eyes, but he did not speak.

Tomas heard him afterwards sobbing under the bed-clothes. This lasted a long time. Tomas felt at last that he must cry too, but took care that the other should not hear him.

Every one was kindness itself to the new-comer, but no one so much so as Tomas. If he could have clasped himself round him like a belt, he would have done so.

Karl went to the Latin school, where he was received free,

so the boys were separated almost all day, nor did they even study together when he came home.

Karl allowed himself but little leisure. He was slow at learning, but still was at the head of his class, and he wished to continue there; so that Tomas naturally could not see as much of him as he wished, or be so good to him as he wanted to be.

When Karl did at last come out he was tired, and did not go with Tomas very willingly.

He did not perhaps estimate all that Tomas had done for him, nor understand how the boy had waited for him, how glad he was to see him. He was the first companion that Tomas had ever had, but he himself had plenty.

The fact was, that Karl was too slow and gentle, always anxious about his clothes, perfectly obedient to anything that was said to him, and in this, and other things, a great contrast to Tomas.

At last Tomas discovered that Karl was just a girl, one more girl up there, and not, by a long way, so amusing as the others.

He soon began to call him Karoline. He mocked at him when he shivered, or was frightened about his clothes. And when he smiled good-naturedly, instead of being angry, Tomas would make his mouth wide by stretching it with his two forefingers.

That was so very funny that the girls began to take part in it. They praised Tomas for his chivalrous behaviour to them, and he was proud of it himself. But both he, and they, could be very unchivalrous towards Karl, without its striking them that they were so. As, for instance, when Tomas conceived the idea that every time Karl showed himself, they should rush at him, one after the other, and dust his clothes with their hands, because he was so frightened about them—he had had so few. So he was brushed and brushed till he began to cry, and was then immediately called "Say-your-prayers boy" and "Cry-baby." And this grew worse when they saw that Karl, though both older and bigger than Tomas, was nevertheless the weaker. So Tomas could show himself off, and at last they really ill-treated him.

Now, at the bottom it was not altogether disagreeable to Karl to be a martyr. It seemed something great to him.

But the others soon discovered this, and would not for the life of them stand it. He was treated worse than ever from that moment.

But where was Augusta while all this developed itself?

Augusta was kind to Karl; indeed, the more the others teased him, the more good-natured she became. But she did not mix herself with what they took up. And besides, lately she had shrunk more and more from anything rough. Whenever Karl sought refuge with her, he was safe for the time being, so that it happened that he did so oftener and oftener, and at last constantly. He dare not enter the garden without her.

Tomas was too proud to appear to notice anything, but he made Karl pay for it.

One especial time, Tomas grumbled about this during a music lesson, and she answered that so it would continue until he became as good a boy as Karl, which he was far from being at present. Then he swore vengeance.

On Saturday afternoons, Karl always went to the churchyard, to put fresh flowers on his parents' graves. On the next Saturday, as he was going down with his basket, Tomas met him in the avenue, and asked him if he would promise not to talk any more to Augusta. But Karl, so accommodating in other things, would not promise this, not even when Tomas struck him. He struck him again and again, with all the strength he could muster, but Karl would not promise to give her up. Quite beside himself, Tomas kicked him in a dangerous manner; he gave a loud cry and dropped down. Tomas had him carried home, and rushed away for the doctor. When, his forehead bathed in sweat from anxiety and the speed with which he had run, he passed the place where Karl had fallen down, with his eyes fixed upon him, another image of his companion rose before him—that of the helpless, silent lad who had knelt down and prayed by his bedside the first evening in his new home.

Tomas kept this resurrection of the former Karl in his soul.

He hurried back home again before the doctor, in order that he might, as he passed the spot where Karl had fallen, kneel down, unseen by any one, and cry and pray.

That evening his mother, Andreas Berg, and he sat by themselves in the parlour. Andreas Berg had come in at

Fru Rendalen's request to tell Tomas the history of his father's (John Kurt's) childhood—to tell it in her presence without any reserve. Berg was a grave man, not free from severity. He had been made angry, more than once, by Tomas's performances with Karl. And he now related the various circumstances of John Kurt's life when a boy, related them without a single word of blame; but this only made it fall the heavier. This was part of Berg's nature.

The mother did not feel it needful to add a single word.

She heard Tomas, late that evening, sobbing and crying beside Karl's bed, and the next day saw him talking to Augusta in the passage.

In the course of the day he had flung his arms round his mother's neck and cried. But he had said nothing, though it worked in his mind for a long while.

In the meantime it was determined that Karl's time of probation should end, and that he should be considered as a son of the house from that time. The doctor had declared that he would all his life feel the effects of the kick which jealousy and domineering had bestowed on him. And this had decided the question.

Another great revolution took place shortly afterwards. The girls who, together with Tomas, had enjoyed Fru Rendalen's teaching from the beginning, were so much more advanced in languages, not only than those of the same age at the girls' school, but also than the boys at the Latin school, that many people wished she would extend her classes, and establish the girls' school for the town up at "The Estate."

This desire, which became unanimous, was strongly pressed upon her. Dean Green was the most eager of all. How could she use her knowledge and powers of administration better? All the development of her character, all the experience of her life, led her to this goal. Think of the Kurts' house echoing with confiding, childish laughter; think that there, the rising generation of women would learn to raise themselves to independence, either in married life, or outside it. The subject symbolised itself in this way.

Very few of us have perhaps noticed that certain expectations and signs, fixed forebodings, chance remembrances, weigh far more in deciding our plans than the simple circumstances of the present time.

Tomasine Rendalen was no exception to this rule. She was, however, prudent enough to ask herself sometimes if she were fit for all that the Dean proposed in the school work. She suspected that he, like all reformers, was over-sanguine, demanding the work of three generations from one, and expecting a single man to give the result of a thousand. She also had good sense enough to doubt if a little more knowledge of languages, a little better teaching of history and similar acquirements, would seriously help forward morality and independence. But the symbol outweighed these objections of good sense. And it really did seem as if a distinct commission had been given to a special person. Here she was in the Kurt inheritance, well qualified for school work: that was undoubted. Fancy obliterating the evil example with a good one. She had had great practice in that. At all events, it gave her strength. Once determined, she exerted herself to make it go forward, and made others do the same.

She raised a new loan on her property and renovated the house from top to bottom. All the windows were removed and enlarged. The rooms on the ground-floor, on the right as one comes in from the great steps, remained as they were. But those on the left, in the wing and upstairs, were for the most part altered, in so far as that the doors between them were walled up, so that they only led into the long inner passage.

The great Knights' Hall on the left hand, just as one comes in from the steps, was made into a gymnasium. The pupils were to assemble there, and morning prayers were to be read in it as well. The double staircase in the passage, which led up to the first-floor, was cut off from the entrance hall by a wall in which were two doors, one on each side. By this means Fru Rendalen kept the hall for herself. The famous steps only led to it, and to the Knights' Hall on great occasions.

The teachers had their separate entrance from the courtyard, while the lower part of the great, empty, useless tower was converted into an ante-room. Outside, the plaster was removed from the walls, and the red colour of the bricks freshened up. It all looked like new. There was a great pilgrimage up there when it was all finished, and many good wishes were expressed for the new school.

Tomasine incurred considerable debt—she had to pay a

large sum for the school which she took over. But from the first, the influx was unprecedented. Little girls from the country, nay, even from the nearest towns, were entered. They were boarded with different people, whom she recommended. She did not wish at first to have any in the house. She must regulate the school.

Sometimes it seemed to her that this simple state of things, a well-regulated school, was what she would never attain to. She got into difficulties, first and foremost, with the staff of teachers. They did not come up to the standard which she proposed. She took on trial, and discharged again, and endured all the discomfort and irregularity, all the over-exertion, which are the natural results of such a position, hoping for better days.

The constant wear and tear, the endless unrest, the anxious cares for money, goaded her on from day to day. The aim that she had originally set herself, the great aim, now seemed almost ludicrous. One thing appeared certain: it was losing her her son; not his affection, still less his obedience, taken as a whole, nor was it his education; but her influence on his character, their mutual confidence, her happiness in him. Something impetuous, fantastic, extravagant crept into his games, his plans, his expression, which she saw increase in a manner she deeply deplored. When she corrected him she saw a gloomy impatience in the nervous glance of his eyes. She felt herself condemned by his air of superiority.

Karl's company only increased this failing, for he was himself an enthusiast. She therefore begged Augusta to check the boy's hot mood, and to try to keep him steady by turning his mind to stern realities. But Augusta never entered into any controversy with him on the subject. So Fru Rendalen saw this tendency increase. This spoiled her pleasure in the school when at last, outwardly at any rate, it began to work well. She asked herself what, as a whole, she had gained by this hunted life beyond increased debt, and greatly increased anxiety. But now she was launched into it; she struggled on from day to day; a moment's pause would bring all in ruins about her.

Of all his mother's anxiety Tomas had not the slightest idea. He led a happy life, developing quickly. Karl's large amount of information helped him. Together they



wove their day-dreams ; together they loved. They devised the strange idea that they would devote themselves to the service and happiness of "the ladies," they and their comrades, for by degrees several others had been drawn into the circle. And there was more beauty, more variety, in all they hit on since boys and girls were constantly together.

Tomas's strength increased, but, unlike his parents, he did not promise to be tall. He was remarkably well made, with a very erect gait. His well turned-out feet were so small that he could wear girls' shoes. He was also nearly as slim in the waist as a girl, but broad-shouldered. At twelve years old he took the first boy's prize at a gymnastic display, which had been inaugurated in that part of the country. He had a powerfully shaped head, his cheek-bones strongly marked. His nose had become much bigger than his mother's, which gave him occasion for much fun, she always answering that his was at least as broad as hers at the end. He had small, finely cut lips, his eyes were not large, and seemed smaller still because he frowned and blinked. They were grey in colour, with a restless but sharp expression. His forehead was fair like his father's but his face, neck, and hands were so covered with freckles, that they were as red as his hair, which stood on end, and was generally untidy.

By the side of the tall dark Karl, with his heavy forehead, hollow eyes, wide, straight mouth, his gentle expression, and slow nature, he seemed to sparkle. He filled his mother with perhaps greater anxiety than there was need for. He had become a true friend to Karl. He loved him heartily. He generally did either love or detest ; there was no moderation in him. Tomas was in his fourteenth year when, in the autumn, it was arranged that he should take a voyage with his uncle, who was the master of a vessel, to Hamburg, and from thence to England and back.

The trip had been talked of since the early summer, but had been postponed. Tomas, who was studying privately, could start at any time, and it would be more manly to go at the time of the autumn gales. His preparations were complete ; they were only waiting for a fair wind.

One Saturday afternoon, Augusta and he were sitting up in an apple-tree—he on a branch to the right, and Augusta on one to the left. They had come to gather the fruit, but

the linen bags, which they had spread round them, still hung limp. She had taken hold of a branch, on a level with her head, and rested her head on her arm. She sat and listened to Tomas. They had seen the new doctor, Knut Holmsen, go in to Fru Rendalen, and this wonderful new doctor was one of those whom Tomas loved. He had lately been reading with him about the Gracchi in Mommsen's Roman History, and it was about them that he was talking. There was nothing equal to the Gracchi in their own history; they were his ideals. But in the midst of an ardent disquisition it occurred to him that if he were to be the Gracchi, Augusta must be their mother. There was nothing grander for a woman than to be the daughter of Scipio, and the mother of the Gracchi.

But Augusta had no desire for this. She could not wish that the mother of the Gracchi should live after her sons were killed. Augusta was always so frightened of death, there was something ugly about it. She sat there with her head on her arm, and said this quietly, as though to herself. She looked very sweet.

Or was she tired? he asked. No, she was not tired, but she wished so much to be quiet. Well, they could easily sit a little longer. She altered her position, and they went on talking.

Supposing the mother of the Gracchi met her sons in heaven? But would the Gracchi and she go to heaven? They did not believe in Jesus. After some discussion the children agreed that now they could be taught about Jesus, and therefore naturally they had gone to heaven.

But after that, what would they do there? Augusta shuddered, Eternity was so frightful. She hid her face, and when she lifted it again, she had been crying. He sat a long time and looked at her.

"Listen, Augusta," he said, "neither of us will die till we have grown dreadfully old, so old that we cannot even walk. It can't be the same then, can it?"

Augusta smiled. "That time you gave me the everlasting, you said I was to think of you when you were dead, you know."

"Yes, I was so frightfully miserable that day, and then I had got that picture of King Edward's sons. Augusta!"

"Well?"

"At sea, in the autumn gales—they are often very dangerous, the autumn gales, you know—I shall have myself lashed fast, and I will write to you exactly what I think. And then you must write down what you think when you read it."

"That might prove dangerous," laughed Augusta. She was older.

He felt embarrassed, so there was silence. But all the time he looked at her plump figure, good-natured face, her heavy braids, and long eyelashes. She sat looking down—yes, she had grown now, she had quite a figure. And those wrists, those characteristic firm hands. He sat and gazed at her for a long time, and then said, "Augusta."

"Well?"

"Karl will write to me every day. Mother has promised him the money. Could not you put a few lines in too—eh!"

"Every day, Tomas! That would be very often."

"But all the same . . . ."

"Interesting things won't happen to me every day, you see, Tomas; it would be only stupid."

She looked at him simply. "But," he answered, "people who care for each other always do write."

He was crimson and turned away. She would be sure to laugh. But she did not laugh. In a few minutes he heard her say (he did not turn round), "Yes, yes, then I will," and she devoted herself to gathering the apples.

At the same time Fru Rendalen and the doctor were standing by the parlour window.

She looked by turns at him, and out towards the children in the apple-tree. The doctor had just told her that Lars Tobiassen had become raving mad, and that his son had been frightened, and gone mad also. He had been near it for a long time. "'Kurt inheritance,' the people on the mountain say there have been so many mad Kurts there, men and women." Fru Rendalen had answered that she was aware of that, and that both before Tomas's birth, and for some time afterwards, she had felt frightened. She was safe now though—"although," and she laughed, "Tomas has something unreasonably exaggerated and fantastic about him."

She looked inquiringly at the doctor, who answered, "Yes, his nerves are good for nothing."

Dr. Knut Holmsen was one of those men who are fore-ordained to be bachelors, though some chance may drift them into matrimony; who never trouble themselves to think or feel with any one else, but always look at things from their own point of view. So now he blurted out this answer as a matter of course. It frightened her, however, terribly.

"Could Tomas become mad?" she asked.

He had not intended to say that; he therefore answered, "Not he, but his children."

She came and stared at him, her face as white as a sheet, and from him out into the garden.

"Do you know what you are saying?" she asked.

Holmsen coloured, for this rough man was particularly faint-hearted. And, to relieve his embarrassment, he began to talk about a book which he had just read, one that every one ought to read—

"Prosper Lucas on Heredity" (*L'hérédité naturelle*).

The two young people in the apple-tree soon afterwards saw Dr. Knut Holmsen go down to the town, accompanied by Fru Rendalen, and a little later she returned, with two large volumes under her arm.

The following evening Tomas sailed, and remained away for two months. At both the ports which he visited he found letters, written every day since he sailed by the faithful Karl, as well as a few lines enclosed by his mother, but not a line from Augusta. She was ill, had a heart complaint—an enlarged heart, it was said. And Tomas remembered that latterly she had always wanted to be in the open air. She had pains in her heart, but a courageous girl like Augusta would naturally never succumb. She would get quite well again.

The ship returned to port late one evening. No one at "The Estate" had any idea of it before Tomas flung himself on to his mother's neck, in the parlour, as she sat there over her accounts.

"Tomas!" she exclaimed, almost as though she were seriously frightened, and that made him all the more crazy with delight. He clung to her portly person with all his strength . . . then . . . he noticed that she was crying. Astonished, he relinquished his hold, looked at her, and flung himself down with his head on the table, sobbing loudly.

Augusta had died two days before. The next morning he went with his mother down to the shoemaker's house to take some flowers; awe-struck, and with his eyes red with crying. Fru Rendalen chose to enter by the door at the side of the house: she wished to go in by the back way. And thus Nils Hansen saw her from the workshop, and came out at once.

Tomas was a little behind. It affected him so much to go in by the old well-known way, that he could not come forward directly. When Nils Hansen observed him, Augusta's playfellow and greatest friend, he burst into violent weeping and left them. It was just the same with Fru Hansen. She was in the large room, occupied with the dead. Her second girl, two years younger than Augusta, was sitting on the floor beside her mother, when Fru Rendalen opened the door and went in.

Laura came towards her and thanked her for coming down again. She appeared composed, but when the heart-broken Tomas came forward with his flowers, she sank down on a chair and began to cry violently, the child crying with her. Tomas could not bear it. He laid the flowers down, he did not know where, and ran home again. He had seen the heavy braids under the white band, a sleeping face, and the everlastings between the folded hands. He knew them again by the ribbon.

What a tie Fru Rendalen felt the school at this time, for the sore little heart constantly yearned towards her. She was so anxious about Tomas, lest his tendency to extravagance of feeling should receive fresh nourishment from his sorrow, nor could she discover how she might be able to prevent this without depriving him of his one consolation. She was astonished when she saw that Augusta's death had had just the contrary effect.

Augusta had feared death, perhaps immortality still more; he was convinced of this, and so would not try to think of her there. It seemed like tormenting her. Most children shudder at the thought of being immortal.

It was Karl in especial who wished to dwell on this theme, but he had to be silent, Tomas would not allow it. It was against her wishes to try to think of her as dwelling in Eternity, he was sure of that. Karl gave in; it was not immortality itself which his friend doubted about, so he humoured him.

Did not Tomas ever try to bring Augusta up before his mind? Yes, whenever he ran his fingers over the piano, he was in her company—they had sat side by side there.

It was of the past that he thought. His mother was astonished when one day, having given her a rather quick answer, he returned at once and threw himself upon her neck; she was so used to his hasty ways that, when he was not actually rude, she often took no notice; she looked at him, "What is it?" He coloured and laid his head down on her shoulder, as he always did when he did not wish her to look at him while he was speaking. "Yes; once when I answered you sharply, Augusta came out after me on to the steps, and said, 'Tomas, you should never answer your mother like that.' I did not think anything of it then, but now—now—I remembered it when I got out on the steps."

During this time they read bits at random out of Lucas's work. The wonderful proofs of heredity in talents and character, coming out even after very long intervals, impressed Tomas strongly. He had a perfect mass of questions which he took to the doctor.

Little by little he occupied himself as before, but he became quieter.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE LECTURE.

ONE spring afternoon in the beginning of May, fourteen years later, a great number of people took their way up the avenue to "The Estate." *Real-Kandidat* Tomas Rendalen was to give a lecture at the opening of the new gymnasium which had been built in the courtyard there; using the opportunity to explain the plan on which he intended to conduct the school; he proposed to take it over the following August. It was known that this had been his intention, even before he became a student at Christiania; that he had no other object in life, either then or later; that after he had passed his examinations, he had taught in different boys' and girls' schools, and during several years had made himself familiar with both, in Germany, Switzerland,

France, England, and last of all in America ; he said that it was in the last-named country that he had especially found what he wanted.

He had declared that the development of his whole life might be found in the lecture which he would deliver that day, and this seemed strange to every one ; all became curious.

During the four or five months that he had been at home he had had the gymnasium built, having turned the Knights' Hall into a place where chemistry and physics could be studied ; people did not clearly understand what these were, but they hoped to find out some day. The tower was turned into a little observatory.

There had been, for some time past, a continual delivery and unpacking of what Rendalen called school apparatus ; the most wonderful specimens were shown to the children. These purchases and his endless journeys had cost no small sum. How had the money been provided ? Quite by chance Fru Rendalen had discovered that the woods had been sold from "The Estate" on different terms ; some before, and some after, the farms to which they belonged had been disposed of. Some of these woods had been merely sold for clearing, and the land itself thus still belonged to "The Estate." But as it had lain long unused, the fact had been forgotten, and the woods had been by degrees absorbed into the surrounding properties. Fru Rendalen lost several lawsuits over this, but she gained others, and it was therefore good Norse timber which had paid for Karl's and Tomas's studies.

Tomas had taken up science, Karl theology ; both of them going abroad. Karl had come home again after two years' absence. Tomas had travelled. During the few months that he had been at home he had given lectures to the girls in the senior classes, especially on Natural Science. For example, he explained to them the very newest discoveries in regard to the activity of the brain, showing them large diagrams. When the children repeated to their parents how these discoveries were made, they began to wish to hear about them as well. And it was not rare to see elder sisters, mothers, or sometimes even fathers, sitting squeezed in among the children in the class-room, listening to him. It can thus be easily understood why the gathering on the present occasion was so large.

Tomas was an ugly, red-haired, freckled fellow, with a somewhat broad nose, and grey screwed-up eyes, with no eyebrows, or at all events no visible ones, and with a thin-lipped mouth like his father's. Yet it was said that the whole school was crazy about him! People wanted to see and hear what on earth it was all about; three ladies to one gentleman assembled up at "The Estate."

A path had been made to the right from the great steps, past the front of the house, and further round the wing, to the courtyard at the back, which was the usual school road. The new gymnasium was in the courtyard as well. There was a man stationed at its entrance to-day, and a crowd of people stood before it who had been refused admittance, and who protested loudly against this treatment.

It was Andreas Berg who was on the watch that only "parents" came in.

This had been clearly stated in the invitation, but it had been overlooked or misunderstood, or else people thought they might as well try all the same, and they were now making a disturbance over it.

They were, of course, mostly young.

There was great merriment when some elder person, who was not recognised as a parent, was refused admission. Anton Dösen, called also "French Dösen" because he had lived several years in France, and who now had a shop for French fancy goods, almost exactly opposite the Frökener Jansens at Bommem, presented himself as a "father," and wished to enter—he had never been married, this same French Dösen. Immense amusement!

The solemn, unmoved Andreas Berg turned him back, and French Dösen asked what the deuce was wanted before he could get in? Must he go to the town, and get the clergyman's attestation that he was a father?

French Dösen had always had the privilege of trumpeting forth his peccadilloes. It amused people to hear of them. His shop was much frequented, notwithstanding his light morals and talk. His competition with the two crooked Frökener Jansens, as regarded millinery, was not hazardous. But see, there actually are the Frökener Jansens, and they have got in! Enormous delight in the assembled company. For there could be no doubt that neither Fröken Jansen had had a child. Heavens forbend!



Andreas Berg explained that that was because they had a niece at school. The reason they had no children? No! that they were admitted. They stood in the place of parents.

"But," observed Dösen, "it must be more to be a father, than to stand in a father's place." Great applause! Beside, did he not stand in the place of a father to all those to whom he gave food and wages? Did he not now? Andreas Berg would admit nothing.

At this moment arrived the town bailiff and his wife. Berg would not allow them to pass, any more than the others, for they were not parents, nor had they any adopted children at school. Dösen cried "Bravo," and clapped his hands, and a number of others with him.

There was a storm of laughter, for the town bailiff was well known and little liked. So they looked forward to some fun.

He was so furious for the moment that he could not speak, but stuttered and gesticulated. He was a tall, thin fellow, with spectacles, and a smile—not of good-humour or anything of that kind—no, there was a sourness about it which was impressed on his whole countenance.

At last he found his tongue, and asked Andreas Berg if he were mad. And his wife, who dearly loved on such occasions to push herself forward, remarked that no meeting in the town could be closed to the town bailiff.

This did not make the very smallest impression on Andreas Berg. He busied himself in opening to some others who came up, and who really were parents, and shut the door again.

Dösen now took up the town bailiff's cause. Andreas Berg ought to understand that if the town bailiff had no children, that was not his fault, nor his wife's either. Terrific applause! "The paradise of parents could not be closed against the bailiff on that account, as long as . . . ;" he could go no further. For the bailiff asked if he were mad. "Yes, in your cause, sir," answered Dösen. What peals of laughter!

At the same moment shoemaker Nils Hansen came up with his little wife. Hundreds of times in his life the bailiff had asked him if *he* were mad, so Nils Hansen laughed as soon as he heard the words.

"Who is mad now?" he asked.

"Andreas Berg," answered the town bailiff.

"No, I," shouted Dösen.

"It's the town bailiff himself," cried out several in the crowd.

"Imagine," said the bailiff to Nils Hansen, "Andreas Berg has had the impudence to—to—to—prevent my wife and me from—from—going in——"

One saw that Nils Hansen found this amusing, but Laura, on the other hand, was astonished, and questioned Berg, "Dear me, how is this?"

But if she thought she would induce Berg to answer, she was very much mistaken. He opened the door for them. "*Vær's go*," he said, and they felt obliged to go in, but they heard Dösen call after them: "The bailiff and his wife may not go in, because they have no children."

This was also heard inside the hall; a sound of laughter from a hundred voices came rippling out; and another wave of boisterous mirth rolled towards the door as it was closed after Nils Hansen. While conversation went on in the hall, a new excitement arose outside. The sheriff had come. His wife had brought a lady, a stranger, with her, whom Berg would not admit; only "parents" were invited, he repeated firmly. He knew this lady was called "*Fröken* \* *Krieger*"; she had bought some flowers from him.

The sheriff, often nicknamed "the ladies' man," a fair-haired man with a sharp waggish face, looked up at the two dismayed ladies; they were both standing at the top of the steps, very red in the face. His wife had always supposed that any lady *she* brought would of course not be refused admittance, and yet this had occurred; they were fairly "caught out," both she and her friend—a butt for the laughter of Dösen and his companions, and stared at pityingly by a number of people whom she did not know, for she was but newly come to the town. She was a handsome woman, with an intellectual face, tall and slender, but she looked quite terrified now; her eyes wandered helplessly from one to another, and at last they fixed themselves imploringly upon her husband, who stood down below with the others and laughed at them. "Is it so *dangerous* for Fröken Krieger to come in?" she asked. Roars of laughter. Apparently this annoyed Berg, he came up without warning and pushed the lady gently to one side in order to open the door for

\* Miss.

some more people. A number of ladies, all married and with children at school, now came up and passed in; the unlucky wife of the sheriff tripped down the steps, her friend following her, looking rather embarrassed; there was a short exchange of words which ended in the departure of the friend; she would go alone, and ran off when the gallant sheriff offered to accompany her; the sheriff himself being nearly run over by a carriage with two large Danish horses, driven by a coachman in grey livery.

It was Consul Engel and his wife who were arriving. They drove right up into the courtyard because Fru Engel was delicate. Nothing could have been more careful, more tender, more charming than the manner in which the consul helped his wife from the phaeton; he almost carried her in. He was a handsome man, with a noble face; his well-known smile was more friendly than ever as he passed through the crowd with his gentle burden. She was handsome too, the expression of her eyes wise and painful, or rather perhaps painfully wise; the same expression lay in the lines of the mouth and in the thin cheeks. Through the whole of her slow progress from the carriage to the steps, and her toilsome ascent to the door, she was followed by the startled, bird-like eyes of the sheriff's wife. They hovered over the invalid till they seemed to fill the air with interrogation. From her they passed on to the consul, from his eyes back again to those of his wife.

What in the world did they want? They filled with tears, she wiped them hurriedly with a shy glance round. At the same moment the sheriff came up to take her in. She was startled, coloured, smiled—nay, laughed. Lord knows what at.

Fru Emmy Winggaard, young and blooming, passed at the moment. The sheriff whispered something to her which made her laugh. He asked if they should not all sit together. Fru Emmy Winggaard's maiden name had been Fürst; she had curly fair hair and lively eyes; she gave several glances across to Dösen, the special friend of her brother, the naval lieutenant. Dösen made a despairing face and hung his head. She understood that he could not come in, and crossed her well-gloved fingers mockingly at him; she passed on. How pretty and merry she was; she was so like her brother Niels Fürst, the lion of this and all

the neighbouring coast towns. If any one doubted that Niels Fürst was the lion of the neighbourhood, let them ask the lady who followed Fru Emmy; let them ask Kaja Gröndal, the wife of the engineer who is never at home. Ask her whether Niels Fürst, who is very often at home, is not the favourite cavalier in all the towns round, and the vigorous lady will look at you without a blush and ask again if any one doubted it? The gallant sheriff let all the ladies pass in first, saying a few friendly words to Andreas Berg, who made no reply. At the same moment Berg saw Fru Rendalen, escorted by her son, but behind them were the town bailiff and his wife; they all four came out from the pupils' entrance in the principal building—the one through the tower. So the town bailiff must have forced himself in to Fru Rendalen to complain! Would Berg perhaps be put in the wrong before all these ill-behaved young people because he had strictly obeyed orders?

They came straight towards the principal entrance, instead of going to the other door, which led into the ante-room where the pupils' gymnastic dresses hung. It could be for no other reason than to obtain admittance for the town bailiff that they came this way.

Fru Rendalen and her son were saluted by those who were nearest; Berg opened the door, she mounted the steps, but then stood back and actually did let the town bailiff and his wife pass in, her son following them. She remained standing. She was a large woman now, the hair under her cap iron-grey, her face brown and stern, the eyes behind her spectacles brightening its expression. She had done some good work, and was convinced that she ought to be shown respect.

"All of you who do not belong here will be so kind as to go; we must have perfect quiet here now."

She had hardly spoken before one or two began to move; when the farthest away had disappeared round the corner, the others followed their example; there was a little tittering, a few whispered witticisms, but they went. Andreas Berg was the only one who was inclined to grumble; it had been hard about the town bailiff. "No more will come now, you can go in too, Berg; many thanks!" and it was all settled.

She went in herself, those nearest rose and bowed, for

they were for the most part her former pupils, and this was the old custom. But when they did so the whole assemblage rose, too, by degrees.

She bowed right and left, and then took her seat by the side of the tribune which stood on the platform. She looked across at the audience. Every place was occupied; some few men were standing in the gangway; these now had chairs given to them; they were brought in by an old woman.

Tomas Rendalen was standing by the window talking to Dr. Holmsen. This gentleman was somewhat fat and florid. His large prominent eyes had a mixed expression of sarcasm and slyness; he stood there, half smiling, half embarrassed, with one hand playing with his brown, slightly grizzled beard as he listened to Rendalen.

Tomas Rendalen was his complete opposite—decided, fiery, eloquent. The school children had been eager to tell that he used scent, and truly—it wafted from him as from some fine lady. There was something precise, too, about his linen, and about the way in which his grey coat, of the most enviably new cut, fitted him. He was well-built and very elastic in all his movements. While he whispered to the doctor he had a nervous, impressive manner, as though every moment were of the greatest importance.

Suddenly he broke off and hurried across the room, for the door had opened once more, and those entered for whom apparently he had been waiting—old Green, led by Karl Vangen.

Yes, now he was *old* Green; a bowed old man who walked cautiously forward, led by tall Pastor Vangen. Karl's face was one of those which do not easily alter; the large forehead, the honest eyes, the deep eye-sockets, and the wide mouth with its slight smile, which Tomas had in his time made such fun of, were all just the same as before, only on a taller body. Tomas came forward to salute the old man, and walked respectfully beside him to where an armchair had been placed for him, beside Fru Rendalen, upon the platform. Karl Vangen sat down beside him, and Tomas Rendalen mounted the tribune.

He pushed his nervous, freckled hands through his red hair, making it stand still higher up; felt for his pocket-handkerchief, took hold of the water-bottle, then moved some things off the desk; he was a dreadfully restless fellow.

He peered through his half-closed grey eyes, now here, now there, finally at his mother and old Green, smiled at Karl and began. His voice was a tenor, full, mellow, and practised, so that it sounded pleasantly.

To the utter astonishment of the assembled company, he said that it was principally on the subject of morality that he wished to speak ; it was principally for a moral object that this hall had been built.

The whole course of education in the school would, still more than before, have morality for its aim.

In order that he might speak freely on the subject, it had been necessary to restrict the audience entirely to parents, or those who stood in their stead, and who might be expected, for that reason, to treat a serious matter in a serious spirit.

There was a seriousness about himself which was combined with but little acuteness : he almost threatened them. He did not in the least perceive how horrified this meeting of provincial townspeople at once became ; he took their embarrassment for a kind of awe, for something of the solemn feeling of a meeting in church. He continued :

"Not alone for woman's sake must this subject be seriously approached, but for man's sake as well. All take care of themselves, men as well as women, but woman had the incentive to watch over her own interests, so she stood higher as a companion and in society.

"It was in this that the school ought, better than before, to aid her.

"The venerable man who sat on his right once said to him, that only those families succumbed to drunkenness whose nerves had first been thoroughly weakened by a dissolute life. In such families the habit of drunkenness very easily becomes hereditary ; I think that more than this can be traced to the same cause. Addiction to pleasure—that undoubtedly often grows in vigorous soil ; but a man may appear vigorous enough and still be excessively enervated. That characterlessness which is incapable of overcoming opposition is, as a rule, the result of the forefathers' sensuality with the addition of his own ; every kind of moral and intellectual looseness and dulness, when it spreads in a family which has at one time taken a foremost place, can, for the most part, be traced back to this cause. At all events, it is the strongest among several. Our passion, our hastiness,

our impatience, our exaggeration, our irritability—unless, indeed, they can be traced to some accident in our bringing up, some purely accidental state of health—find their strongest cause here.

“All such are weaknesses contracted in the course of several generations; perhaps increased in the later ones.

“The investigations on this subject are so recent that we cannot yet bring forward such strong proofs as we believe to exist; it is only lately that the work of seriously minded men and women has been concentrated on this object, as the most important possible. But those who realise that this is the case are still few. Therefore schools are not by any means able to cope with the subject; especially girls’ schools, which are absolutely bad.

“The girls’ school which we are now in is, as a place of education, as good as any in the country. I have satisfied myself on that point, but it has been the greatest regret of the principal, during the whole course of her labours, that the aim which she originally set before herself, that of giving a *larger* share to moral than to general education, has not been attained to. It is on this point that my mother has conferred with me more than on any other, so that at last it became my daily thought.

“My parentage, my education, my career have in more ways than one prepared this work for me.”

[His voice trembled a little, and he was obliged to pause, his mother was affected: general wonderment.]

“‘Woman’s moral training’? most of you will object, ‘is there anything amiss with it? Among the lower orders perhaps, but in the refined classes of the town is it not excellent? Protected by religion, in the pure atmosphere of home, in the regular work of school, in a guarded life passed among those of the same age and sex.’ Yes, and what results from all this?

“Let me merely in passing take the pure atmosphere of home. In a seaport town—all will admit it—the strongest current is by no means a moral one. Traders and sailors, as is unavoidable from their mode of life, are among the worst in respect to morality. No one dare deny it. An early wandering life takes the morals on to very slippery ground, and a merchant’s business, where the percentage of profit fluctuates as it is honestly, or dishonestly gained, does not

strengthen the moral life. His cultivation is, as a rule, very slight, his reading confined to a few newspapers, or perhaps novels; his intercourse, outside his own occupation and family, next to nothing, so that here there is little counterpoise. A sailor's life is, as a rule, one without ties, passed in every sort of company, in all parts of the world; in nine cases out of ten the master is an uncultivated man, perhaps a rough one, often tyrannised over by his "owners," and almost always tyrannical himself when opportunity offers. As things stand with us at present, when the skipper has learned to filch a percentage from the freight, as well as from everything he buys for the use of the ship, even to the very water—I know such cases!—systematic robbery, one may say—we can understand that high principles will not be cultivated in such a life. And but a rough example is given, as a rule, to the subordinates.

"The return of men such as these by no means strengthens the desire for morality in the town, or increases its stock of character. As regards the homes, those of the skippers especially, we can conceive that the children's bringing-up must have received a strong bias; or, if every one cannot imagine it, I will lay it out before you."

[I wish that my readers could have seen the horror, the confusion, the shamefacedness of the assembly, the rage of some, of three sunburnt skippers, for example! Others gazed uneasily into their hats, or at the backs of those before them. Some there were, however, who delighted in the scandal! They alone ventured to look up, their eyes turned eagerly towards the smiling Engel, the skippers, the tradesmen, the sheriff, and their wives—towards all, indeed, who on one account or another must sit on the stool of repentance. There were women ready to cry with shame, anger, and vexation at being there; they were prepared to fly at any moment, but dared not actually do so. There were men who thought, "If this goes half an inch further—by all the devils I shall be off." But they did not move. When the doctor blew his nose, they were all as startled as though it had lightened.]

"Many people firmly believe that if a child sees nothing indecent at home, and hears no doubtful stories, everything has been done which can be done, especially if they are heedful that the child himself does nothing



improper. I contend that if no more than this is done, a child is exposed to every possible evil. Here people rave about the innocence of ignorance; there is something concerning that subject which I cannot now speak about—I shall take an opportunity of doing so later; I confine myself at present to saying that that innocence which knows what the danger is, and has fought against it from youth up, that innocence *alone is strong*. All education which tends to further this object must have, as an absolute condition, *full confidence between the child and its parents*—at any rate, between the child and its mother; or, to carry out the whole of my idea, between the child and that parent who is most fitted to gain its confidence; for this is, in itself, a special gift, and if neither of the parents has it, which may easily happen, then find some one who has. Use all means to accomplish this.

“If the child’s father be a man who has not honourably fought the fight (it must come to him sooner or later), he is then, not only the fifth wheel in the coach, which would go all the same, but, as a rule, an actual hindrance. For there is often something in his manner, his speech, his ways which wounds or tempts; those subjects which should be seriously and firmly dealt with become with him almost amusing; they are treated as things to be lightly touched upon.

“In this town, such as I know it, and indeed as you know it who have grown up in the place and become sharp-sighted in regard to it—in this town, I think, most houses are weak in this respect. The fathers give no help, the attempts of the mothers to keep up a thorough confidence as between comrades, are certainly great, but they rarely succeed, they do not understand how to do it. Till this is altered, the work at school for the cause of morality will prove deceptive, for it can easily place a child between noble teaching and evil practice; a knowledge of evil unsupported by watchful confidence may easily itself become a temptation. St. Paul has pointed this out.

“I forewarn you for this reason: our work at first will often rise up in witness against us, but for all that there is no other course open to us—no, no other. Do we not know that there is one particular epoch of life for which, more than for any other time, it is necessary to provide and to secure means of helping? How to do this is the question.

Ask any doctor, ask any experienced teacher, if this is not the case.

"My mother, whom I am justified in calling an experienced teacher, can bear witness that at this period of change most girls deteriorate in that they lose their openness, and much of, or all, their industry and sense of order; something strange and of a mixed nature seems to enter into their composition—very different, however, with different individuals. Remember, she says, 'that this is the case with the majority; there are exceptions, but this is the rule.'"

[Looking at the audience, you would have thought that these remarks applied only to women, and not to men. For the men looked openly and unblushingly at the women, which only made the moment more painful for the latter, especially for those who were known to all the world as having been pupils of Fru Rendalen.]

"Therefore it is precisely on this point that our work must be brought to bear, it must be completely prepared to meet this physical change, and everything must be directed to this end.

"For it is no use denying that this exists, or shutting one's eyes to it. It is the most important thing that a teacher can be concerned with. What, compared to this, which really means the preservation of body and soul, are, say, a knowledge of languages, instruction in the piano or in feminine neatness, but mere luxuries. History, geography, arithmetic, writing, are of rather more value, but even they are of secondary or even third-rate importance.

"Well, but religion, you will say, does not that often help? Ah! what do you understand by that word? Knowledge of God and of the moral laws is, of course, a most needful knowledge, but it is only when such knowledge influences the conduct that it becomes effective. *It is very rarely* that it does this. Do not build too much on a faith that may be lost. It is only a minority on whom religious belief has a lasting effect. We do not realise this, because with us religion is almost the only thing which holds its own—outside, that is, of our large towns. Religion appears to us to be powerful, because we have not yet acquired the habit of looking about us, and because most of us are a good deal given to deceiving ourselves.

"Children, in matters of this sort, do not really stand on a

different level from adults ; do not imagine that they do so. They can, it is true, be very easily led, but they can be brought with even more ease and more completely to forget one thing and take up another. It takes very little to make them believe, but it takes still less to make them doubt, so that the ratio between belief and unbelief remains the same. Those whose religious belief forms a lasting restraint on their moral character are, among children as among adults, but few.

"There are four clergymen present. I ask them if they can rise and contradict me. I do not believe that they feel any inclination to do so."

[A short pause. All eyes were fixed upon such of the clergymen as they could see. The four reverend gentlemen sat as unmovable as graven images.]

"Do I hold then, you ask, that religion is of no importance in a school? Much the contrary! But there should be no class of religious instruction which does not partake of the thorough earnestness of a religious lecture. Let it as often as possible be given by the person who will have the preparation of the child for confirmation—that is to say, generally by the clergyman. I would say entirely by him, if that could be arranged. Thus the relation of the clergyman to the teacher would be that of a support to the latter.

"I cannot go further into this question ; I will only add that this is the arrangement adopted for our school. The friend of my youth, my brother, Pastor Karl Vangen, will take the children between six and sixteen every morning for religious instruction and edification, and the intention is that he shall conduct their whole religious training until their confirmation. But it follows from what I have said that he can only hope to make the relationship of deep and lasting value *for a very few*. It is only right that this fact should be realised in schools."

"Lately," continued the speaker after another very short pause, "an attempt has been made to set up the study of history and of general literature as branches of knowledge which have an influence in the formation of character. When these studies have been more fully adapted as subjects of instruction than they have yet been, they will have more importance in this respect.

"Undoubted assistance was, of course," he went on,

"always to be gained from these studies. The child learned to know of good, great, and noble thoughts, and obtained a grasp, if only a slight one, of the course of human history, as well as the history of single peoples or great men. But it can never be a matter of the *first* importance to hear about others."

[The audience now become curious. Where would he get to at last? They felt that something important was coming.]

He leaned forward over the tribune and said slowly :

"The most important form of knowledge which a man can acquire, is the knowledge how to regulate his own life; the next, how to regulate the lives of those who come after him."

"These words of Herbert Spencer may be taken as a rule of life for the whole world. Until this also is made the thing of most importance in schools, other subjects will not fall into their right places in the whole scheme of instruction or the arrangements subsidiary thereto. But the task of learning self-restraint, of learning to guide our offspring, this is the moral aim and the only stable ground of all instruction.

"If at an early age you obtain adequate knowledge of how your body is constructed and how it works, and if you also learn to know how you can benefit or injure it, and through yourself those who will be born to you, or who may be dependent on you, this knowledge not only becomes your greatest safeguard if you *will* use it, but as a rule it gives you a desire to do so.

"A feeling of self-respect is aroused more strongly by knowledge than in any other way, but that this may be the result, the knowledge must not be imparted too late. I need not say that ordinary schools give far too little instruction of this kind, and that little not as it should be given. The pupils must understand why it is given; the teacher must be open, thorough, with no concealments, for the very things which are usually kept out of sight *are the most important*.

"I speak of that period of life to which I have before alluded. Is the child ever told what that is which is beginning? I mean, has it full, absolute knowledge? does it know what temptations will come, or why they will come? Has it learned how they are to be met? or how at that time it

can create conditions for health, and through its health its character, good-humour, happiness?—that on that time hangs its future life, nay, that of its offspring? Is that taught in such a way as to be branded, so to say, into the child's will? Have the subjects of which I spoke been raised to a level of one which here, and now, might guide the scholar's fancy by noble incentive, strong purpose, enthusiasm? for children, especially young girls, can be made enthusiastic.

“Or, to come down to what every one is capable of forming a judgment about, do the parents at home know that at that age certain sorts of food, certain seasonings, are baneful to some natures? That for some a special diet is necessary? What sort of diet that should be? Is it known in schools that a special course of gymnastics may be of great assistance? Children are not all alike in respect to the amount of watchfulness and management which they require; some few require no special attention. But that most do need it, is a fact upon which I confidently appeal to the experience of this meeting, whose members have all been young once and have had young companions.”

[He made a pause and looked round the room; a little bird could be heard twittering in the distance.]

“A further question: Is it not at that period of life that those, who had not learned to do so before, now learn to deceive? To act secretly, with a bashfulness which wounds the sense of honour and thus injures the character? If one thing can be admitted, another cannot—to the destruction of the character. Quietly, and as a rule quite unsuspected, at that age the powers of self-destruction begin to work in body and character; no one will dare to contradict me.”

[The terrible pauses which he made were almost worse than anything he said; here he made one again. But he now passed on to something else.]

“But is there no place in the world,” he asked, “where the schools are arranged as these experiences demand?”

[He answered this question by fully describing several schools in America and England: some for girls alone, some for girls and boys together. He also described several colleges for young women alone, and some for young men and women; he did not consider that any one of them, singly, offered all that he wished, but each one had some-

thing, many a great deal. He spoke at some length on a medical college at Boston, where an unmarried woman was professor of anatomy, and that, for students of both sexes; he mentioned that she further endeavoured to get her female pupils appointed as teachers in the girls' schools in the city. This lady professor was of opinion that every school should have a doctor as a teacher, and that he, or some other person, well instructed in Natural Science, should overlook the whole of the children's studies on this subject; the lessons must always be given so as to make a deep impression.]

"Already children can learn by the aid of microscopes how plants, for example, are formed of cells, how the different parts are developed from one common origin; they can observe how they breathe, see their division into cells, the growth of the upper parts, the fructification; can have their imagination seized, nay, even regulated, by Nature's work and harmony. The child should early obtain a holy admiration for all that is healthy, fresh, natural, as well as compassion for all that is injured or sickly, a horror of anything unnatural, though this must be blended with compassion as well.

"Microscopes, analysis, and such a variety of diagrams and apparatus must be used, that there can be no possibility of a false impression being conveyed on any of the principal subjects, nor must the instruction become merely a wearisome lesson or a lecture over which they would go to sleep; it must be real personal work, developing the powers under the teachers' guidance.

"Schools would naturally become much more expensive than at present; the providing of appliances, if that were properly done, would constitute an especially serious outlay." He told them what the price of a single microscope would be, and each school ought to have a large number; beside which, the teachers must have larger salaries. "But the war estimates are paid," he said cheerfully, "a race, strong both morally and physically, would be ample compensation."

"To obtain more time, not only must the complete apparatus be used, which itself immensely facilitates the course of instruction, but other subjects must be taught on quite a different method from that at present in use, and all lessons must be done at school under the guidance of the teacher. School must therefore, of course, be held both morning

and afternoon, and a dinner of sufficient and nourishing food be provided on the spot. When the child left the school it should be completely free, should have nothing on its mind for the next day.

"About all this and about arrangements as to instruction on the new plan, he would speak at the same time and place next Saturday; he invited all the parents to attend.

"He would not conceal his belief that in no short time teaching all over the world would be arranged in the way he had indicated; all at the cost of the State, of the Community. This was society's most important cause.

"But, uninfluenced by what might come, or what now existed, his school for the development of the powers and characters of women would follow the lines which *he* thought to be right. There is no precept so strong as example.

"He asked earnestly for the parents' help. He hoped to make it an honour for this town to have taken the lead in this cause, but it would be an expensive enterprise. What expense would not be incurred merely for the lady doctor, who was coming over from America, to undertake the teaching which he considered as the most important for the school?"

[Movement, murmurings, excitement among the audience for the first time during the lecture.]

"Yes, in Boston I met a Norwegian lady who went over there when still very young, and who had passed her examination at the medical college several years ago. She is called Miss Cornelia Hall; this lady is already an experienced teacher in girls' schools, and has also a practice; in coming here she makes a sacrifice for her native land, but we cannot entirely accept this, we cannot allow her to relinquish a salary of three thousand dollars a year to receive the ordinary pay of a Norwegian teacher. She would not be able to practise here except under the conditions of the law with respect to Quacks, a law as unworthy of a doctor, as of the people who had made it.

"Beside this, although the collection of school apparatus is no doubt very considerable, it can hardly be too much so. The labour in teaching is lessened in exact proportion as these apparatus are augmented.

"I am not ashamed to declare that my mother, who has spent a fortune on this, is unable to go any further. I have, perhaps, already overtaxed her resources. I therefore

confidently turn to all at this meeting, especially to the women, and say to them: If you know by experience the value of a highly cultivated woman who has learned to control herself, and rely on herself, then come to my help! Do so for your children's sake, do it for the sake of a good example! For myself, I will live and die for the cause in our native town."

He spoke these last words with a suddenly rising emotion, it came over him with such overwhelming force that he forgot about the opening of the gymnasium. He had to leave the tribune without even a bow; he disappeared through the door of the little ante-room, and from thence ran across the courtyard into the house. The audience remained seated as though he had not finished, the end came so suddenly upon them, was so startling, and his agitation had such an electrical force about it, that it touched them. They must have time to reflect. Some of ruder nature down by the door rose meanwhile, the rest following their example. And now a moment came for Fru Rendalen full of the greatest surprise.

She did not see well, not far even with her spectacles, and besides during the whole time she had looked at no one but her son. The muscles of the right side of her neck ached from sitting with her head turned in his direction; when the lecture was half over, therefore, she moved her chair and sat completely turned towards him.

The subject itself was known to her clause by clause, but his energetic delivery, his personal power, his boldness, were entirely new to her; they did not cause her any apprehension, but rather the contrary; she was naturally courageous, and she knew that if openness were necessary on any subject, this was the one. She knew the actual state of things and the indifference displayed. She wanted them to be made to listen *for once in their lives*. And he did it so nobly, it seemed to her. She followed and felt all his inward agitation; she knew that if he did not keep a watch on himself he would be overcome.

When, therefore, the three or four words to the meeting suddenly fired it, she was as much upset as he. Those closing words dimmed her spectacles, she was obliged to dry them, and while doing so saw nothing and thought of



nothing outside herself. But she roused herself, and hastily prepared to rise when the others did so ; she wished to be ready to receive any who might desire to congratulate her, and perhaps send a message to her son.

And after all no one came. Ah yes, the two Frökener Jansens came, the two crooked little milliners—quiet, cordial, and smiling as they always were ; they expressed their thanks and sent so many messages to the “ School Director ; ” if they had been allowed they would have liked to have gone in to thank him themselves. But the Frökener Jansens were the only ones. Nils Hansen did not come, nor Laura ; not one of her old pupils, not even Emilie Engel, poor dear Emilie of whom she had been thinking the whole time ; no one came. If any one had come up to Fru Rendalen, and in the name of the meeting given her a box on the ear, the worthy lady could not have been more astonished. Gracious Powers ! What did it mean ? For her his lecture expressed their mutual life, thought for thought, what they had learned and experienced, and had confirmed from each other’s lives. But it was more, it was her whole work with him first and last, from his birth till now, when he stood there bright, cultivated, eager, full of one great aim ; the lecture was the expression of this work, this development in full flower, which was now about to bear fruit.

How she loved him, how she admired him ; *she* knew what he had fought through and effected, in these eight-and-twenty years. She knew what was woven into every thought to which he now gave utterance.

She had had visions of all this, but with no clearness ; it was he who had brought *that* ; she could never have expressed it clearly, but *he* did. Was it not like a fairy tale, in spite of all their work ?

The dim idea she had had at first of ousting the Kurt inheritance by her own, and that she had afterwards daringly begun when she renovated the gloomy ancestral house, and made it clean and bright, devoting herself to bringing “ confiding childish laughter ” into it, was now complete. She had begun it confused, stupid, but stout-hearted ; and now it was accomplished by him, the child : was it not a fairy tale ?

How more than happy she was ! She could have knelt down before the whole assemblage to thank God—yes, joy-

fully with a song, though she did not possess a single true note.

She felt that if all these people came up to thank her she would not be able to control herself, but what would that matter, for he had done it all so well. And not one single person came! Yes, by-the-by, the Frökener Jansens came, but no one else; they were all going. But the old Dean? Yes, he sat there still pondering; a decided desire to speak to her might have made him rise—yes, to say something on the part of the others. It was only now, when almost every one was gone, that he began to move; he raised his eyes, looked inquiringly at her for a few moments, got up heavily, and came towards her at last.

"Yes, dear Frue, it was cleverly done."

"Yes, was it not?"

"Very cleverly done indeed, but I would give a great deal that it had not been done."

"But, Dean?"

"No, I cannot talk about it; there is too much noise here and I am tired—another time; remember me to him; good-bye, Frue." He took Karl's arm and turned to descend.

There was only one who was as moved, nay, overcome, as Fru Rendalen, and that was Karl Vangen. Like her, at the beginning, he had only been intent on the lecture and the lecturer. In his innocence he had never grasped the possibility of any one's feeling otherwise than that this was the right thing, spoken by the right man; but later, chancing to notice the audience at a moment when some question was addressed to them, he began to doubt; this doubt increased until at last he sat there with a beating heart. But that no one should come to Fru Rendalen, no, not one, even, of her former pupils! He knew her face, he saw how she was pained. And now the Dean as well! He let go his arm and seized her hand in both his, he would have liked to hug her; but there were still too many people in the room. He looked at her till the tears sprang to his eyes, and so, notwithstanding, he hugged and kissed her—any one might look who liked. Then he gave his arm a little awkwardly to the Dean, and helped him down.

This made the worthy Fru Rendalen herself again; she hurried, with a lighter step than one could have thought possible, out of the door to the little ante-room, and from

there across the courtyard to the house. She looked for her son there, he had just taken off his coat and waistcoat and was going to have a bath ; but she could not wait until he had finished, she threw herself on to him, pressing him to her breast, and crying as she exclaimed : "Tomas, dear Tomas, my own Tomas !"

He also had at last realised that something was amiss, and now her look, her manner, confirmed it ; besides, she said nothing, gave him no message, although she had remained behind.

He felt, now that the strain was over, a gloomy anxiety, a stab at his heart ; but he did not wish to talk about it, neither did she, so she left him to take his bath.

Andreas Berg remained behind in the gymnasium, and after the last person had gone he locked the door and walked in a dignified manner to a corner near the principal entrance. The different gymnastic apparatus were piled up there and covered with a large sail. He seized hold of the sail, dragging it noisily down on to the floor. Upon this two heads came into view, four arms, which hastily twined themselves together, two skirts, and four laced boots ; two fiery red faces, bathed in perspiration, were pressed close together ; a tangled mass of fair hair was mixed with a dark one in the same condition. Berg stood there, looking severe.

"I see several times as the sail moved," he said ; "I could not think whatever it could be ; at last, thinks I, as it was two of the little girls, and it's two grown young women ; aren't you ashamed o' yourselves ?" One of the girls began to cry, the other laughed. "And the children of worthy men ; the sheriff's daughter," he continued to the one who was laughing, "a grown girl, confirmed and in the senior class, and you there as well ; do you think I don't know you ? Nils Hansen's daughter ; your mother was here, she should ha' seen you under the sail, and your father as well ; there's a power o' difference between you and your sister Augusta ; she was always pretty behaved. Take yourselves off. I'm going now to tell the mistress "

He was not out of the door before they jumped up. Good heavens ! what did they look like ? their clothes, their hair, their faces—especially their faces—exactly like a little child who has been crying and has rubbed the tears all over its face with grimy hands ; their hands had been dirtied by

all the implements among which they lay, and they had used them to brush away the perspiration which ran into their eyes ; and how stiff and wretched they were ; though they had had plenty of opportunity to prepare a comfortable place for themselves, they had remained so very long in the same position. At least an hour before the lecture began they had been under the sail, never feeling secure the whole time. One cried and scolded the other, who laughed ; but when they both got a good view of each other and told one another how they looked, they burst into peals of laughter, and rushed into the little room at the other end of the building, where they knew that there was toilette apparatus. After that they were to go across to tell the boarders all about it.

For it was not for themselves alone that they had hidden under the sail for two hours ; no, they had been chosen for it by the senior class ; they had all come and pulled the sail over them. The girls had had some food with them, and some beer to drink as well, but they had disposed of that long before the lecture began. Over the way, in the boarders' sitting-room, the senior class was assembled. Something which only the parents were to hear about must be so very extraordinary ; and those two knew all about it now.

The two girls only allowed themselves time to wipe away the worst of the dirt, and to smooth their hair so far that they need not be ashamed to run across the courtyard. But hurry as they would, the impatience of the others stole a march upon them. The whole class tore across the courtyard to the gymnasium. They had waited to see Andreas Berg shut up and disappear ; he had taken his time over it, but at last he had gone into the kitchen. The two had been chosen on account of their good memories, and, incredible as it may seem, they remembered almost all the lecture, at all events all the portions which were most telling, the best delivered and the newest.

And if Tomas Rendalen had lectured to an ungrateful audience, here was one which was responsive enough ; young girls love courage ; when they have not to be in the front themselves they glow with admiration.

The tall, fair, slender one with the large eyes, is the sheriff's daughter—look at her ; she has her mother's bird-like face, but instead of its expression, hers was held high as if for a bold flight. It was framed by a mass of

disordered fair hair which now, when her eyes, her whole face glowed, seemed to glow with them. She did not remember the different heads of the lecture in their exact order, the most important, the most interesting, came first; from their school-life and association with Tomas, Fru Rendalen and the teachers, they were all better qualified to seize his meaning than the audience in general had been. But as Nora was in full flow she stopped, grew crimson, then white: Fru Rendalen stood there on the steps!

Andreas Berg had kept his word, and they had forgotten him.

When Andreas had come to her, Fru Rendalen had been so upset, that it was an absolute delight to her to find anything upon which to vent her displeasure; she marched out down the great steps; she wished to catch the girls in the very act, and therefore went the whole way round the wing and along the gymnasium, so as to come in behind them.

But just at the ante-room door, which the others had of course forgotten to shut, she heard Nora, helped out by her friend, delivering the lecture—Tomas's lecture—with Tomas's tone of voice, his delivery, his fire, with really noble eloquence. Yes, there was one who had listened! The stately Fru Rendalen would in pure self-forgetfulness have held back just for the sake of hearing and being with them, but it was not construed in that way; Nora's terror, the cry of the others, as they turned and saw this all-powerful lady, was worth remembering. Fru Rendalen was school-mistress enough to look for this token of respect; she raised her voice and said, "I ought to be excessively angry, and that to some purpose! I see you *understand* this! But anything so marvellous as Nora's memory I have never heard."

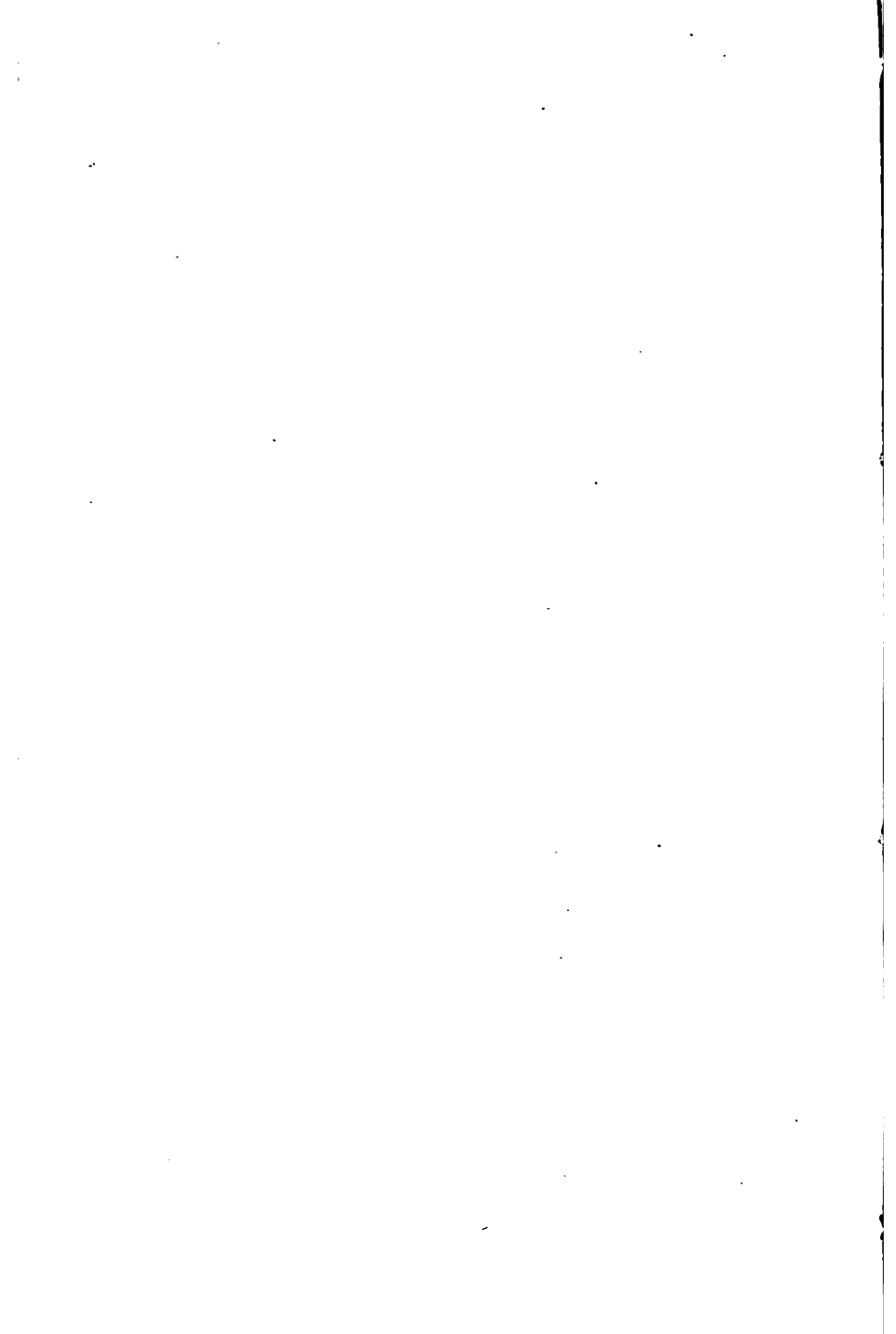
"Never heard anything so marvellous"—it was well that it was not school time. But when Nora heard that it was not to cost her her life, and saw that Fru Rendalen was really pleased, she flung herself upon her neck with all the impetuosity of sixteen and burst into tears.

It pleased Fru Rendalen. "You are a wild, sweet girl," she said. "Listen, child; when you have finished here, come over to me and we will have some regular fun."

#### IV

#### THE STAFF

THIS, thinks the intelligent reader, will be an account of a school, and I quite agree that so it ought to be. But life's logic is not always ours, and we are going to keep to that of life.



## CHAPTER I.

### A GREAT LECTURE AND A LITTLE TOWN.

THAT same evening Tomas knew what Dean Green thought of the lecture. Karl was the bearer of this information. Tomas went out to him when he saw him in the avenue, and they went for a long walk into the country to the left of "The Estate."

Dean Green had assumed that when Tomas proposed to explain his design for the school, it really was that design he meant, and not something quite different; he had not for a moment imagined the possibility of its being a scheme on a large scale in which the plan for the school was merely hinted at. Such a lecture, on such a subject, might be given in this country, but it must be in one of the large towns; in a small one it might be possible to do so with impunity ten years hence, and at all events it should be given by a man in an independent position; but a man who wished to found a school on it . . . . a more ill-judged lecture the old gentleman could not imagine. It was incumbent on Karl to tell this to Tomas, word for word, for he must have no illusions as to what would follow. If the school went on after this it would be exclusively owing to the respect which his mother had inspired. After such a challenge, it was sure to be condemned. Not by what it taught—no, but if any girl who left school during even the present year made a false step, the school would bear the blame. The Dean had gathered from the lecture that Tomas himself had feared this. Why in the world, then, had he not held his tongue? Now a single chance might destroy the school. It is impossible to describe how this took hold upon Tomas; he felt that in repeating this Karl



agreed with the Dean; he felt that his mother would go over to them as well, that every one would. He had been guilty of egregious folly. They did not return before midnight. They could not talk to his mother that evening, everything was quiet when they entered their rooms.

Tomas had his old one, next to the bath-room, but it had all been done up for his home-coming. Karl had the one next it, the corner room; like all those in the house, it was so long that the curtains which divided the bed from the rest of the room were hardly noticeable. Their supper was set for them, but they were cast down to such a degree that they did not touch it. After Karl had gone to bed, Tomas sat beside him, nor was it only on this night that he did so.

Early the next morning—it was Sunday—Fru Rendalen was down at Nils Hansen's; she wished to act according to her usual ways. She came up again just at the time people were going to church. Karl saw her from his window, which faced the avenue, and told Tomas; he himself was going to church. Tomas went out with him to his mother; she looked worried.

"So not even Nils Hansen?"

"No, Nils Hansen himself had said he did not like to be called names in church."

"What had he meant by that?"

"That he went to a public lecture to learn something, or to hear something pleasant, not to be abused himself, or to hear others abused."

Fru Rendalen had answered that a lecture must point out people's faults.

"No, you must not *invite* people to hear about their faults."

"But Fru Hansen?"

Laura did not think his lecture wise. "Children must not know everything."

On the contrary, the shoemaker had objected that his peasant experience taught him quite the opposite; in the country, children knew everything from the time they were quite little, and although there was much immorality in the country, it was not for that reason, but because the whole subject was neglected there. He himself had been brought up in a thickly populated district, where both sexes went to the same school and played the same games until they

were grown up ; they knew everything, but he looked back to that time with confidence.

Nils Hansen had said this so often before that Tomas was puzzled why his mother should repeat it now. She did it merely to gain time.

The fact was that Fru Emilie Engel was ill ; she had been carried straight to bed from the carriage, the doctor had been there yesterday, again during the night, and had just now come away : Fru Rendalen had met him ; she began to cry.

If Emilie succumbed to this it would be her fault, she might have understood that Emilie could not bear that men's infidelity should be spoken about while her husband was beside her ; so, weak and delicate as Emilie was, Fru Rendalen ought, at any cost, to have prevented Tomas from doing such a thing.

Instead, she had rejoiced over what he had done. That was because both she and others always agreed with Tomas when they were in his company, whether they would or no. For of course he had gone too far. The doctor had said so too. What had he said ? "He said that it was those cursed nerves—Kurt excess—in another form." She began to cry again.

And as though Tomas wished on the spot to show her that the doctor and she were right, he flew into a violent passion. "It was really dreadful to have come home to such a miserable position, to be obliged to work among indifferent and poor-spirited people, who fled right and left as soon as ever a reform was brought forward."

"It was not the reform itself but the way——"

The way ? A reform cannot be effected by stealth, it must show itself for what it is. Yesterday evening, when he was tired, he had felt this icy coldness as well, it made him shiver ; but now it really was all too mad ; if every one deserted, he would hold his ground ; he certainly had thought that his mother would have been better than that ; for in reality it was mostly her experiences which he had brought forward yesterday.

This passed, out in the garden, on Sunday morning. On Thursday at midday the local newspaper—the *Spectator*—was delivered to its subscribers. Under a large note of interrogation by way of heading a correspondent wished to know if

it really were true that in a large school in the town the greater number of the pupils had fallen into immorality? Although it was the principal himself who had said this to several hundred people, one must still permit oneself to doubt it. That he had not been misunderstood would be proved by the following quotation: "This (namely, immorality) *was the rule*, he said; *the contrary was the exception.*"

This contribution was not signed. It fanned the smouldering feeling to an open flame.. No one spoke of anything else. There was an abject terror among all the school-girls the next day; they came up to morning prayers, pupils and teachers as well, as though they were about to be punished, and Karl Vangen was so much agitated that he could scarcely pray. The day's work was dull and spiritless. Rendalen did not show himself.

He responded in his own name in the next number (Thursday's). He said that if this misunderstanding were intentional, it was paltry; if unintentional, explanation ought at least to have been sought privately. Nothing had been said that in the least resembled this; all that was said was that the transition from childhood to maturity was so difficult a time for most that it became dangerous, and it therefore needed watchfulness.

What the principal of the school had noticed was that the characters of children of that age altered, that they lost their industry, their sense of order; "that this was the rule, the contrary the exception." Could any one discover in this any such frightful suggestions as had been made?

The answer was good, but it did not avail, the excitement was so great that no words could set things straight. "Why was this transition dangerous?" they wished to know, if not for the reason he now tried to evade?

Just below Rendalen's answer appeared in the same number another question, signed "A Mother:—" "Why was it of such great importance that little children should learn how the race is propagated?" This inquiry gave expression to a *second* side of the scandal which filled the town. Under this question was still another addressed to Herr *Real-Kandidat*, School Director Rendalen; it begged "most respectfully" to ask, if he would not allow the lecture, which he had delivered last Saturday at the new gymnasium of the

girls' school to be printed. Those who had heard it might thus enjoy it again, and those who had not been so fortunate ought not to lose the opportunity of obtaining some information on so remarkable a subject: signed "A friend of sound and safe enlightenment."

In the next number (Saturday's) an answer from Rendalen: "Children already learned natural history, and therefore of course the terms for propagation of the species. Why they must learn this, any head-master or principal of a school could answer as well as he; this formed no part of the new side of his proposal, and only so far affected small schools as regarded the scope and method of teaching the subject." To the other question he replied, that a lecture to which only parents had had admission was evidently not fitted for general circulation.

Few found this answer satisfactory; he simply evaded the question; at least three hundred people had heard the lecture, so that it might quite properly be discussed in the press.

Three more contributions in the same number. The first expressed pleasure in the promptness of the reply; would Herr Rendalen now further explain how the sinful inclinations of young people could be checked by microscopes? This witticism was at once recognised as Dösen's. The second was signed "*Arithmeticus*," and reckoned up what it would cost the country if, in the future, every school were to have a doctor as a teacher; he calculated that a sum of one million kroner a year would be necessary for this item alone; if every school were to have a chaplain as well, this would require an equal sum; a rough estimate of the cost of the apparatus, necessitated by Rendalen's plan, would, reckoned as income, be hardly less than one hundred thousand kroner a year. Therefore the school budget of the country would be burdened with an addition of about two million one hundred thousand kroner a year. He asked if this were reasonable?

After this came a communication addressed to Herr Tomas Kurt, otherwise Rendalen. A child of the town, it said, had fouled its own nest. If this town were worse than others, which the writer begged leave to doubt, then the ancestors of the lecturer were certainly most to blame for it, and that both in ancient and modern times, he was

certainly therefore the last who ought to talk? This contributor signed himself "*Suum cuique*."

On the same day that these appeared Rendalen gave his second lecture, and at this, which was announced as being exclusively a technical one, twenty people, including the teachers, were present; beside these, ten came in during the course of the lecture.

One could see that those eight days had pressed hardly upon Tomas, Fru Rendalen, and Karl. Tomas's opening to-day was another man's—tame, flat, hesitating; his nervousness had increased twenty per cent, his handkerchief was out of his pocket and in again, the water-bottle was emptied, his hair pushed up; he fidgeted with his hands, and his feet moved about as though he were blowing the bellows of an organ. But when he began to speak of the school plan, exhibiting and explaining appliances and apparatus, he caught fire and was soon his old self again, his superior power of making things plain and of awakening interest in them was recovered. A microscope with a leaf under it was passed round while he spoke; he showed them a succession of new things, either entire collections, or large coloured pictures, or highly finished models which could be taken to pieces and studied in the most minute details; for example, a man's chest, stomach, neck, head, some of the finer parts being on an enlarged scale. Such a collection of apparatus, he said, could never have been made in their own country. "We are indebted to the interest of the world at large that we, remote and small as we are, are able to see such a one; and, moreover, that I should have been able to procure it." Some of it, however, he said, had been given to him.

The few who were present at the lecture were extremely pleased; they thought the school might still do well even if he had given an unfortunate lecture.

But these favourable views were carried away by too few to create a counter-current. In Thursday's number a contributor asked the man who had signed himself "*Suum cuique*," if it meant "For every pig." If this question were on behalf of Rendalen it was absolutely the worst which had yet been advanced against him. The contributor began by saying how audacious it was that a young man, and one, moreover, who had scarcely been at home since he was grown

up, should descant upon the morals of this town with a boastful superiority. Not only that, but he had spoken as though he knew every skipper in the country, as though he had followed them round the world and instituted inquiries about them; and in order to fill up the measure of shamelessness, he had talked as though he knew the whole trading community of the world. A man with such great effrontery, and so inconsiderate a mode of expression, ought not to be a teacher in an educational institution, least of all its principal. Under these circumstances, proposals ought at once to be made for the formation of another school. It was already known that a well-meant application to the former principal to continue her work as before, without Herr Rendalen's help, had been fruitless. Well then, the writer would call upon men of position to come to the front with a view to the formation of a new school. Such a call would receive universal response. Every one in the town wondered who this contributor could be; that very evening the suggestion was canvassed in the club, but neither then did he make himself known. All agreed to wait for Consul Engel's sake; they did not in the least doubt that he would be on their side; every one knew only too well what had been the result of Rendalen's lecture in Engel's home, but it would not do to talk about plans to him now. Fru Engel was dangerously ill.

Although the deliberations lasted only a few minutes, every one agreed to this at once. When it was over it was not more than nine o'clock, so Dr. Holmsen, who had been a passive listener, went straight from the club, which was on the market-place, up the avenue to "The Estate," and repeated all to Tomas Rendalen; "the sooner he learns it the better," Holmsen considered.

"Leave this wretched hole to the devil," was his advice. Tomas took the doctor in with him to his mother and repeated to her what he had been told, adding at once that he should certainly go away.

Karl came home at that moment; it was all told to him and he agreed that it was useless to go on after what he had heard that day in the town. But Fru Rendalen would not on any account consent that they should give way; better embody the whole school plan and its grounds in a book, and appeal from the town to the country at large. There must surely be enough sensible parents in the whole of

Norway to enable them to have a full school. It had not, she said, been her plan but Tomas's, and he must therefore carry it through.

She understood Tomas : it was only necessary to overcome the first painful impression and he would be himself again. They did not separate that night until twelve o'clock, and then they were all agreed in the determination to continue the plan.

It was the school work which gave Tomas strength for this; he was an unequalled schoolmaster and found his greatest happiness in it, and now he brought all his powers to the task. He showed the pupils the most amusing experiments that he knew, and described, explained, and lectured. He still assembled the senior class, as he had done ever since his return, one evening a week in Fru Rendalen's room, for a special meeting. He had given them some idea of the great question of the position of women, as it affected the minds of the whole civilised world; he read to them, he played to them; at this time, of course, these meetings had a special importance for him.

He never, by a single word, touched on the present strife, but in his choice of subjects for reading and conversation, nay, even of music, he involuntarily gave them an impression of his faith in a great cause, of his sufferings when his susceptible mind had received a blow.

The senior class believed unswervingly in him, and this had a great influence on the others : very soon he took over the instruction in singing for the whole school; they practised elaborate choruses and amusing plays; and this was conducive to good-fellowship as well.

But notwithstanding all this, signs of rebellion showed themselves, and that they every time disappeared again, was mostly due to Karl Vangen's morning religious instruction to the pupils and teachers. Karl was not a highly gifted genius, but he had one quality which outweighed genius, he had never said what was untrue; he always said a thing exactly as he felt it, nothing could alter him in this respect; and as his life had been, at one time, deeply imbued with sorrow, which had at a later time, been turned to happiness, the impression made by both remained with him, even in the tones of his voice; this was taking. He prayed so earnestly to God for peace in the school; the strife outside

must never be allowed to pass the steps. "We here, all of us, wish nothing but good to each other, do we?" This was sufficient to bring some of them to tears. On one occasion he added, that he was empowered to say that any who had the least doubt about the school could leave at any time, the usual notice of withdrawal would not be enforced. They must tell this to their parents—tell them this, whether they were happy or not, *exactly as it was*.

Had the foes of the school discovered what power Karl Vangen possessed up there? For the assault was now directed against him. The *Spectator* contained a paragraph, headed "To private chaplain Karl Vangen." Every one had a regard for his character as well as for his good intentions, therefore they were surprised in the highest degree that he could countenance views such as had been expressed. "Only one with too little intelligence or too much credulity (*sic*), could fail to see that this really meant the putting of religion on one side and the substituting of natural science for it."

This elicited a perfect avalanche of letters; we will give one of them: "The writer cannot forbear to express his sorrow for what he has lived to see—namely, that when an audacious voice asked from the tribune of the gymnasium at the girls' school if it were not true that only excessively few are permanently affected by a religious life, *four of the clergy had kept their seats*. Did they in their hearts assent to such a scoffing speech?"

"Was not the message of Jesus given to *all men*? (see Mathew xxviii. 19, Mark xvi. 15, Luke xxiv. 47, Acts x. 42, 43, Colossians i. 23.) To that degree it was given to all that first and foremost it was understood of the simple, (see Matthew xi. 25, Luke x. 21, 1 Corinthians, i. 19-27; Romans i. 21, 22.)

"If, then, absolutely every one cannot be permanently affected by the Divine truth, what fearful deductions might not be drawn from this! Nay, could the Bible itself be a Divine truth?"

"The man who asked this so presumptuously lives among teachers of the Church, nay, is one of their friends. Therefore I may venture to say that the Voice of Unbelief is gone forth into our midst (see 1 John ii. 19, Acts xv. 24 and xx. 30, Galatians ii. 4). Where were the four watchmen of



Zion? I was on the point of rising, but I waited for them. I ask again and with sorrow, where were they? *Surely they did not sleep?* (see Matthew xxiv. 42, 43 and xxv. 5, Mark xiii. 33, Luke xxi. 36, 1 Corinthian xiv. 33, 34, Thessalonians v. 6, Ephesians v. 14).

"If I were to put my name to this it would give no food for reflection; therefore I put the following holy words and numbers, 80th Psalm of David, 7th verse."

The whole town looked up the 80th Psalm and read: "Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours, and our enemies laugh among themselves."

This quotation gave expression to the anger which all felt, that through their quarrels, the town had become the laughing-stock of their neighbours.

For the rival papers of the neighbouring towns were holding festival over this scandal. Sarcastic reports and revelations hailed down; the town had never been famous for its godliness, and as little for its morality and general virtue, but rather for wealth, extravagance, and enterprise. The most unblushing expressions of admiration for the sudden change, the astonishing moral gravity, absolutely and altogether miraculous, which had come to "The little Babylon," were constantly to be read in the newspapers of the "paltry towns."

A few days later one of these yelpers began a *feuilleton*, obviously written in the town itself. It was entitled "Kurt's Cove," and the *cronique scandaleuse* of the town was most wittily set forth in it, naturally with feigned names, but every one recognised the stories; the *feuilleton* closed with the remark that one quite understood that it remained a sacred duty for Kurt's Cove to hinder a reform of morals in the town. As this was the first thing which had appeared on the side of Rendalen's new school, every one believed (a proof of how prejudiced they had become) that if Rendalen had not himself written the story, he had at least helped to do so.

A notice was now issued, printed in large letters, convening a meeting of the Sailors' Association, "in consequence of the insults against our noble seafaring community, which have been flung at us from a certain quarter."

The meeting had this remarkable feature, that hardly three sailors were present. It was presided over by the owner of

a wharf, who had never been to sea at all; the principal speaker was the harbour master, who had of course at one time commanded a vessel, but a very long time ago. He thundered forth tremendously. It was he who had composed the written protest which expressed "the scorn" of the sailors for all such talk.

A copy of the protest had been sent on the spot to Tomas Rendalen.

Thus far everything had been all that could be wished, but when the punch was brought out and they had taken off the first edge, they became a little too warm. It then pleased the only captain present, Kasper Johannesen, to declare that "Tomas Rendalen was—devil take me—right enough." What a wild tumult ensued! The harbour master at last moved that this new slanderer should be turned out. Kasper Johannesen would never let himself be turned out by a fellow who "*had taken percentage himself.*" He knew plenty of people who had dealt with him! The wharfinger would have put the matter aside in a dignified manner, but Kasper Johannesen merely told him to "go to H—l." Did they not all know that he had become rich over unseaworthy vessels, had not Lloyd's agent himself said so? Yes, that was a pretty sort of way of showing kindness to sailors, &c. &c. It ended in a fight out in the street. Ended? It did not end all that summer and autumn!

There was no more talk of the school in the town for weeks, no one spoke about anything but their business, and which of the captains were honest and which "percentage thieves;" still about business, and which of the captains were out-and-out thieves, and which only thieves in a small way. And again, who among the captains were absolutely honest. Business again, and about captain N. N., who, every one knew, could retire and set up a business for himself. When the ships came in at the end of autumn, the captains themselves took part in it. Some were dismissed, and then informed against others who were not. The mates and seamen did not wish to come forward as witnesses, but were forced to do so. The most violent hatreds were founded or were fought out on the spot; the "skippers' war" saved the school.

The town was not large enough to have two burning

questions going at once, and naturally that which concerned gain was far the most important.

But if the "skippers' war" temporarily saved the school, it did not save Rendalen himself; he might expect that the first opportunity would be taken for a reckoning. He never willingly went into the town—at all events, not in the evening.

He received a reminder of the state of things when, shortly after "the war" had broken out, he had to go down quite early one Sunday morning, with a carriage, to the custom-house to meet Miss Hall, who was to arrive by the English boat. That day the choral society and the athletic club were starting on an expedition, a couple of hundred young men therefore had assembled there, notwithstanding the earliness of the hour. Rendalen did not feel himself safe among them; he was hardly allowed to pass in peace, angry looks and threatening hints followed him, and, as he got into the boat, the rope was cast off in such a way that it knocked off his hat and splashed him—of course entirely by accident.

They understood what he was come for, it must be to meet the new guardian of the town's virtue, the American lady-doctor. The heavy bows of the English steamer could be seen standing in—they postponed their own departure until they had seen the young lady. Rendalen had got her and her luggage into the boat; she was the only passenger. They must have a look at something so extraordinary.

After all, she looked quite a child! a little, slight, active creature, who declined all help as she came up the steps; she was down again in a moment, because the people in the boat turned one of her boxes upside down and she could not explain herself in Norse. She was quickly up again with it, then off to the carriage, into it in a trice—one, two, three—active and smiling; but only when she was seated did she look round with surprise at the gloomy suspicious crowd; a long inquiring look from two large eyes was cast upon them. In the meantime Rendalen gave orders about the luggage, and put something to rights with the reins, before he got up. Her woman's eyes made use of the time. They possessed a clear, cool power of observation; they did not wander over the whole crowd, but picked out several

faces here and there from among the young people, quickly, certainly.

Those who received a look felt it at the bottom of their hearts, and there was not one of these two hundred young men on the quay who had any doubt but that those eyes could discover several things.

A little later in the course of the "skippers' war"—that is to say, just at the end of the holidays—the news spread round the town that the lovable Emilie Engel, the friend of the poor, the friend of every one, had been given up by the doctors.

Fru Rendalen, in addition to everything else, had had increasing prickings of conscience as regarded Fru Engel, and now the news came to her as a stunning blow.

Of all her pupils since Augusta Hansen, no one had been like Emilie Engel, so pretty, so clever, and so good; she had attached herself to Fru Rendalen as to a mother, and had given her, and her alone, her confidence when she became unhappy because she loved the man who deceived her.

All the world had known for a long time, what she had only learned in the last year or two. It was Emilie's sufferings which, more than anything else, had made Fru Rendalen glad that Tomas "took it all up," as she expressed it. And now? Neither she nor her son doubted for a moment that every one would be convinced that Tomas Rendalen had killed her by his roughness.

The bitterness would all be aroused again with increased strength.

Fru Rendalen had not obtained leave from the doctor to see Emilie; Dr. Holmsen had said in his rough way that she was too nearly related to the lecture; this remark had got about.

Emilie Engel died early one morning, and in the afternoon her spiritual counsellor, old Green, drove up to "The Estate." He brought a last greeting from her, and gave Fru Rendalen her savings-bank book; in it she had written, in large trembling characters, "For the school—yours, E."

The Dean informed Fru Rendalen that this had been done with the consent of her husband. The amount was five thousand kroner.

Fru Rendalen's agitation and happiness, her grief and thankfulness were so great, that she was obliged to leave the

room and did not show herself again. Tomas came home just at the moment, and met the Dean as he was being helped by a servant down the great steps. The old man asked him to go to his mother, he knew she wanted to speak to him. Tomas was startled, but he controlled himself and helped the Dean into the carriage.

Fru Rendalen was in her bedroom, walking up and down, crying bitterly ; when she saw Tomas she threw herself upon his neck, while he implored her for God's sake to tell him what was the matter.

She could only look towards the book ; he saw it and took it up. He felt at once that this was salvation. What he had suffered now became evident ; he, too, burst into tears.

The next morning a message was sent round to the parents of the pupils by Fru Rendalen, asking if they might be allowed, in the name of the school, to pay a tribute to Fru Engel's memory ; if so, they must all assemble, dressed in white, at the churchyard gate on the day of the funeral and walk before the coffin, the younger ones strewing flowers, the others singing a hymn, to be followed by a chorus at the side of the grave.

All who obtained leave were to assemble at the school that day at twelve o'clock.

As only a few days intervened before the opening of the school, nearly all the pupils were in the town ; the rest returned by twos and threes, not one was absent.

It really was incredible what Tomas Rendalen accomplished in seven or eight days ; he felt that a battle was to be delivered.

The next number of the *Spectator* announced the decease, with a few words on Fru Engel's many good works, and the addition : "We understand that she has left a sum of money to an institution in the town." What this announcement lacked in plainness, was remedied in the paper. That day there was not a single attack on the school.

Under these circumstances Fru Engel's funeral became an exceptional event. This was shown both by the preparations which were made and the reports which circulated.

The schools asked for, and obtained a holiday ; it was decided to close all the shops, to strew the streets along which the procession was to pass with fir branches, and to

have minute guns fired from a flag-ship. It was reported that the band from the nearest garrison town had been engaged and had obtained leave to be present. The principal merchants of this, and the neighbouring towns, were to take the coffin from the hearse at the churchyard gate and carry it to the grave.

Several steamers brought people, from both up and down the coast, who wished to see and hear.

When the church-bells began to toll on the day of the funeral, the streets were quite full, and there was soon no space to be had either inside or outside the churchyard ; if the crush had not been foreseen, and a number of men stationed to strengthen the police force, ladies would not have dared to venture there. As it was, the school had plenty of room, as well as the mothers and sisters of the scholars.

Nevertheless, when the minute guns began and the music was heard, still more when the procession came in sight, the crush became excessive ; some screams were heard, and a number of people became alarmed ; but things soon became quiet again, excepting that the excitement increased.

The band came up to the gate, stood there and continued playing before it, while the hearse drew up and the merchants came forward and raised the coffin. The numberless flowers for which no room could be found were gathered up and carried after it.

In the meantime Rendalen had worked his way out from the procession, and marshalled his white-robed flock within the gate. The coffin was carried in, but they remained quiet until the hearse had driven away and the procession was formed. The music ceased, the school children began to sing strongly and charmingly, and this change from brass instruments to girls' voices was striking.

From this solemn moment, as the funeral train moved forward, the little white-robed flower-strewers before, followed by the singers with the coffin next to them—from that moment the character of the funeral changed. Here was a festal procession, sorrow was converted into beauty, the loss into a full-handed demonstration of honour. The pageant of riches had paused before the gate of the dead. All presented themselves as an offering. Fru Emilie Engel was buried like a princess.

As the hymn ascended from the girls in front, and all the little hands began to feel in their baskets for the flowers, all eyes turned towards them ; all thoughts followed this white line as it wound up the slope among the crowd of black-robed women, for these streamed along with them. The war which had lately raged was remembered at once, the thought seemed to hover in the threatening atmosphere above them and over the black train which followed. Fru Engel's pale face rose to their memories as they heard the hymn. It was poor, poor Emilie, who was being buried, the hundredfold deceived Emilie, whom all of those present, who were her elders, had known from childhood, and had seen every Sunday in church, pale and melancholy.

Was it not as though these little white-clad girls had come forward to take her from those who had come with her? By her legacy she had given herself to these little ones. And afterwards, when the long white train streamed on to the planked floor which had been prepared, with a railing on the side next the grave, it again seemed as though they, and they alone, had a right in her.

Rendalen stepped up among them, with his hat in his hand. The little flower-strewers had had their baskets replenished, and arranged themselves before him. The coffin was lowered, there was silence ; Rendalen gave the sign, subdued music began and the chorus joined in. He conducted with a slight movement of his hand, otherwise he was perfectly still, filled with emotion and overcome by the moment. All these voices gave answer for him, they sang thanks for the new school over the grave. The women were much affected. Karl Vangen's anxious eye sought Fru Rendalen, he saw how much she was shaken, and worked his way towards her. But as soon as she had taken his arm she wished to cross to the side where they were singing ; she must see the grave. He led her forward. But after she had come, there was a sense that something was there which belonged to that other phase ; it was only dimly perceived perhaps, but it became quite clear when, the singing being ended, old Green was helped up beside the girls and began to speak. He repeated words which Emilie had spoken on different occasions ; collectively they formed a picture. Everything was expressed in these words, and yet nothing was actually told, every one understood without offence being given.

The one who was the most moved was Engel, for her deep devotion to him was expressed in one or two of these utterances, and against his will these words made him burst into violent sobbing which he could not restrain.

Green now ceased speaking, he concluded with some words of hers, which had followed her gift to the school. "There are two parties in this question . . . . She had chosen hers," he added.

The music began again, and with it the chorus; the old man was helped down while the little ones leant over the railing to strew their last flowers. At the same moment it thundered out in the west; far out the sea looked black; a rain-storm was coming, a heavy one.

Towards the town one saw how the flags drooped against the dark sky, all foretold violent rain; again a crash of thunder, much louder and nearer; the mourners began to move about, some pressed forward to look into the grave or to speak to the family. A short time afterwards, groups of white-clad girls passed down the road in strong relief against the heavy sky and the dark green trees; some of them began to run about, and others followed their example; some, to Fru Rendalen's horror, began to laugh and shout.

They were at dinner at "The Estate," when Fru Rendalen received two small anonymous contributions, with the motto, "There are two parties." During the afternoon they received several more, all anonymous, but none of them considerable. Still, it showed that the school had friends as well as enemies.

They had not time to dwell long on this, for that evening they were to have a little memorial feast at the school, to which, Fru Engel's friends were invited, and both the senior classes. Fru Rendalen was to tell them about her companionship with the departed; old Green had promised to come as well, and perhaps narrate something. There would be music, the chorus would be repeated, and so forth.

The whole day had been spent in preparing the place where the feast was to be held, but even so, they were hardly ready. Once more they were interrupted by a letter, this time from Dr. Holmsen; his servant brought it up. The doctor's name was not put to it, but his handwriting was as



well known as his servant. And who besides would have signed it,

“AN OLD FIG.”

The letter ran :

“DEAR RENDALEN,—

“‘There are two parties.’ That is certainly most true, although I consider that one of them has acted devilish stupidly, and I do not in the least feel able to join myself to it. Enclosed is a cheque for three microscopes, as you have taken it into your preposterous Kurt skull that it can be done by microscopes. I don’t believe a doit in it. The power of knowledge will do no more here than the power of religion ; it will all remain just where it was. But something white, something of a song, passed through the air to-day ; that might do something perhaps. Here is the money, any way.”

The senior class was already gathering in the boarders’ sitting-room. The young ladies were to be in mourning as far as taste and opportunity would allow, and this was something so new and interesting that they were sure to come before their time.

The feast was to be held in the laboratory—that is to say, the Knights’ Hall ; it had of course cost some trouble to prepare it for a funeral feast, but as the first ladies arrived it was finished—only Emilie’s portrait was still to come.

The carriage with the two Danish horses and the man in grey livery on the box, came slowly up the avenue. Fru Rendalen and Tomas met it at the foot of the steps. Tomas opened the door for a young lady in deep mourning, who flung herself on to Fru Rendalen’s neck ; she was Fru Engel’s only daughter, she was called Emilie also. She was to remain at school a year longer.

She was an unusually pretty girl, set off as her slender figure and delicate complexion now were by her mourning. Over her hair, the hereditary Engel hair, neither red nor yellow, she had a black veil, and nothing else. She mounted the steps on Fru Rendalen’s arm, crying ; Tomas followed with the portrait, which was covered with a cloth, for it was raining.

All rose as they came in, the girl herself wept still more piteously and sought a corner, where she hid her face behind her veil and pocket-handkerchief. The portrait was put up

on to the chimney-piece of the laboratory, which was covered with black ; Norwegian flags were arranged on each side of it, and garlands were now hung round it.

The ceremony began with a duet, a funeral march, played by Tomas Rendalen, and the girl who had sung a short contralto solo up at the churchyard that day ; Augusta Hansen's sister, who had hidden under the sail on the day of the lecture.

After this followed some speeches, then the chorus ; all went off excellently ; there was much feeling, at times agitation. At the close there was a hymn as an introduction to a few words from Karl Vangen. He had lately read that life is not a closed road, but an open one ; he spoke on this.

In the meantime, simple refreshments, such as were usually served at the school parties, with the addition of dessert and wine, had been spread in Fru Rendalen's sitting-room ; for Tomas wished, in conclusion, to take the opportunity of proposing the healths of the senior classes and to thank them, and with them all those who had helped that day to celebrate a beautiful memory. All who had sung to-day at the churchyard, with the town below them, and a large number of its inhabitants before them, must have felt something which resembled a covenant with the school.

The pure memory of the dead had smiled upon it. "That covenant shall be kept," he concluded. "Shall it not?"

"Yes, yes," came from the whole group ; they all pressed towards him with their glasses, the young eyes sparkled ; but the first was Emilie's daughter, the others made way for her ; she coloured with agitation and gratitude as she touched his glass with hers.

By ten o'clock they were alone. Tomas said to his mother as he was going to his room, "It was not so mad after all to give that lecture in the gymnasium—what do you say?"

"Ah, do you know, Tomas, I really begin to think too that—No, no. It *was* mad. Pray do not let me be befooled again."

A maid-servant came in with a note which had been forgotten ; it had arrived during the evening.

"Do you see? do you see?" he laughed, and opened it. It ran :

"Yes, you think you have conquered, you slanderer. I saw your conceit to-day, as you stood there among all the little girls whom you had befooled into doing you a good turn. Selfishness stood out from your freckled, grey-eyed face, as well as from your Judas hair. Fie for shame! but you will be struck when you least expect it, you beast." *Veritas.*

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE STAFF.

Fair Milla and brown Tora,  
Broad Tinka and slender Nora.

It was disputed where this remarkable verse with its rhythm and rhyme was heard for the first time, whether in the senior Latin or senior Commercial. The dispute can never be settled now, but when these girls showed themselves it was often shouted, sung, and bawled after them—at first in turns with another by Dösen, which ran, "*Nora, Tora, ora pro nobis*;" but as it was incomplete, the names of Tinka and Milla not being mentioned, it was dropped in favour of the former. This one was also given up; it was perfectly well known who was father to the latest name for them; Rendalen called them on a certain occasion "The Staff," and after him the whole school, after it the boys' school, and at last all who were inclined to pay them a compliment. We know three of the Staff already—that is to say, we know them from the others, not more than that. "Fair Milla" is no other than Emilie Engel; she looked like a picture in enamel in her mourning. Broad Tinka is Katinka Hansen, Augusta's sister, the contralto; and slender Nora is the sheriff's daughter, the one who hid under the sail, the one with big eyes and wavy hair.

Brown Tora, on the other hand, we do not know, and she shall remain a little longer shrouded in mystery.

A year ago a new sheriff was appointed to that part of the country, a secretary in a government office, called Jens Tue, otherwise known as the ladies' man.\* Instead of

\* Pigernes Jens.

becoming resident he went abroad with his wife, whose chest was rather delicate.

This lady had, by jealousy and insincerity, missed her true foothold in life, and both in her thoughts and actions she flitted like a bird from one interest to another; she wished to appear so immensely delighted, so taken up with intellectual questions and music—until one day her strength proved insufficient; she collapsed.

Her husband carried her off with him, and as during their tour he was all that was pleasant and amiable, her bird-like nature required nothing more. She came home again, well and happy.

It would have seemed more natural for Nora to remain at Christiania with her friends and relations. It was said certainly that Fru Rendalen's school was so very superior, but that could hardly be the whole explanation; all were curious about the Sheriff's daughter when she appeared. She was a fashionable young lady, tall and slender, and if not exactly elegant, still stylish in dress and manner; a little supercilious still she did not give offence—she was too pliable for that too quick as well, entirely taken up with the fancy of the moment. She gave an impetus to all she did, and people forgive a great deal for that.

But no one would forgive her letter-writing, or the incredible number of letters which she received weekly! Not the teachers, for she neglected the school work; not her companions, for she neglected them; nay, she had hardly looked at them! She went to sleep every night with inky fingers and a heap of letters beside her bed; either she was writing letters or reading letters, or crying over them. During every recreation time she ran upstairs to add a few lines, or to read a letter over again, which she had just received. As she was worried by the pursuit of the others, she disappeared after every meal. Where was she? There was a hunt for her, and she was found up in the top attic, writing of course, this time upon a large barrel; she was blue with cold. She had left at least twenty particular friends behind her at Christiania; all the twenty wrote to her, and all received answers, long answers—one must never be shorter than the others. Happily, she had another passion, and it often chances that one thing counteracts another. She was crazy about music. She sang snatches of songs with great feeling,

but, partly because at her age she could not sing much at a time, partly because she had not training enough to carry out a delicate intrepertation, she could never properly render anything as a whole. But even so, she was much admired by her companions, and by none more than Tinka Hansen. For Tinka was herself musical, but in another and more unpretending fashion. Like her sister Augusta, she had developed early, especially in her powers of conversation. Katinka was even-tempered, bright, dependable ; everything she played, and that was a great deal, she knew by heart. It was therefore she who obediently accompanied Nora's songs. But her execution was not worth much ; Nora very soon took her in hand, and was not satisfied until she had brought her to the point she wished ; Tinka was extremely grateful for all this.

One day Nora discovered Tinka's powerful contralto, and from that time there were duets and duets. Their age suggested prudence, and if Nora would not use moderation, Tinka both would and could. Nora was used to command, so there were quarrels ; but Tinka was so accustomed to conquer when her conscience told her that she was right, that Nora was completely vanquished. This was the foundation of their friendship. To have a friend who at once admired and restrained her was especially safe and good for Nora. But Nora acted upon Tinka like a succession of impressions of art upon one who has seen nothing up to that time. As Nora was absolutely confidential, it seemed to the conscientious Tinka that this ought to be returned.

Every one knew it, but not to a living being would she have admitted it, Tinka was engaged. He, the man, had just gone to college ; she had a letter from him once a week, for many reasons she did not wish to have them oftener. He was called Frederik—Frederik Tygesen ; his father was the stipendiary judge Tygesen, here in the town. Nora was "the first person in the world" whom she had told this to.

How delighted Nora was ! Really, properly engaged, with letters every week and the tacit consent of her parents. How had it come about ? Well, that was the odd thing about it ; they neither of them knew. They had once, when she was eight years old, through an open door, heard Fru Rendalen and her mother talking about Augusta and Tomas

Rendalen, about what *he* had said to *his* mother about Augusta, and what *she* had said to *her* mother about Tomas. Ever since then these children had been fond of each other, just as those other two had been; but they had never spoken about it—never. A sincere friendship was founded between Nora and Tinka upon this confidence, and Tinka's friendship brought others with it. Nora was obliged to recall some of her interests from Christiania, and by degrees to form a new circle of admirers.

She began to write less frequently to the friends in Christiania, and the letters would begin, "It is a terribly long time since," or "I really am a wretch who——," or "Procrastination is to blame."

But there was a limit to those whom she could conquer in the new senior class, and this did not please her; in fact, she principally coveted the friendship of those who withheld it, but all the same she could not pass this boundary. The fact was that a queen had reigned there before her—nay, was there still. Her ways of gaining power were different from Nora's; whether they were less or not, depended on who it was who measured them. First of all, she was the richest heiress in the town; secondly, if there were the slightest sign of rain, snow, or cold wind, a servant drove up to fetch her home, and then it was a question who should drive home with her.

She had almost always something good with her; her pocket-money was of that description that the more she spent, the more she had; the resources of her dainty little purse were incredible in this respect. She got money from her mother, from her father, from two unmarried uncles. As well as this she was pretty, discreet, attentive; no one had ever known her to use a hasty word, or be rough, even at the gymnasium; she was always very polite and a little subdued. In her eyes, to forget yourself was the worst of crimes. She had lived, so to say, wrapped up in cotton wool, and one felt this whenever one approached her. We know her already; she is Emilie Engel.

She was not specially gifted, but was industrious; she really worked hard when there was anything on foot. Every one liked her, several paid court to her, one or two absolutely raved about her.

Tinka Hansen belonged to none of these groups; if

ever she devoted herself to any one it would be to her opposite ; quiet, dutiful Milla was too like herself.

As Nora first attached herself to Tinka, and through Tinka to others, Milla was offended. When Nora turned to her it was too late ; there was plenty of politeness and willingness to oblige, but not a word for her singing, not a smile for her Christiania witticisms ; never so much as a glance when the whole class, during one of her lively descriptions, hung admiringly on her words.

Nora could not endure this indifference ; she condescended to pay court to her in all those ways which are only known to a young girl. In vain. At last they divided into parties. Nora considered Milla insignificant, egotistic, cold, prim, missish ; Milla considered Nora—no, Milla did not consider Nora anything, she let her friends talk and she listened. Nora's jaunty Christiania style of manner and speech were unbecoming, her caprices could not be endured by any one who respected herself ; her accomplishments were all superficial, she was characterless ; besides, it was considered that some of her remarks showed a want of religion, and Milla's party was religious.

Milla had been confirmed at Easter. The increasing weakness of Fru Engel had given a tone of enthusiasm to her religious thoughts and to the aspect of her mind ; she found comfort through it, and need for it, and she endeavoured to lead her daughter in the same direction.

At the time of her confirmation Milla found a confidant in the niece of the Frökener Jansens, little Anna Rogne, who was extremely religious ; she was two years her elder, but she was small and delicate ; indeed, on more than one occasion her life had been despaired of. Anna had more religious knowledge than most grown people, and she enraptured Karl Vangen at the confirmation classes. Milla, whom she had imbued with some of her enthusiasm, had no objection to share in it to a slight degree. As soon as little Anna observed this reflection of her own thoughts, she rejoiced from the bottom of her heart, and declared Milla to be "spiritually minded." She was astonished that they had not discovered each other before.

Then came the time when Milla's mother was given up by the doctors. Little Anna's energy was more than natural ; she watched beside the sick-bed with her friend, she read, she sang, she prayed ; for Fru Engel's life must and

should be saved ; the doctor could not save her, but prayer could—how confident she was, how enraptured ! And then when Fru Engel died notwithstanding, she would literally have rejoiced to have given her life for Milla ; it was so beautiful to her to see the rich heiress, surrounded with all the comforts of life, pleading on her knees to Jesus ; and now, when the prayers had not availed, she still trusted—nay, in the midst of her sorrow she thanked God with her, entirely submissive to His will. Little Anna felt from the bottom of her heart that a bond had been twined between them which death alone could sever.

Milla returned to school three weeks later than the others ; she took a place next to Anna Rogne. They drove up together nearly every day, and they returned together in the carriage, for Milla was still living in the country, and Anna was almost always with her.

Milla's return made a stir, her mourning suited her to perfection ; her pale face and subdued manner accorded with it like dull silver work on velvet. The quiet gentleness with which she accepted everything, even Nora's eager worship, gained her much considerate kindness.

The first day or two seemed devoted to expressing sympathy with Milla.

But there was a new face among them, a new figure there on the form in front of her, a new voice, fresh ways—and, what was not less important to Milla—a new dress. Especially when the new hat and mantle were added to it, a more daring choice of colours was presented, a more delicate cut, richer details, than she had ever seen before. She knew who the new-comer was—the daughter of the chief custom-house officer Holm, from Bergen, the one with the brown face, large dark eyes, and curly white hair : a curiously shy man, who drank, drank so that it was only through forbearance that he retained his post ; he had ten children !

Tora was the eldest, and had been brought up, from her twelfth year, partly in England, partly in France, by an uncle who had been a shipbroker, first in the one country, then in the other ; he had just died, leaving his adopted daughter a small annuity. Milla knew all this. Anna had also incidentally observed that Tora Holm was pretty.

But this was not the right word. Where were Anna's eyes ? Tora was a beauty, and her beauty was singular and



"foreign." Anna had used her ears as little as her eyes, for there was but one opinion about it.

Milla did nothing the whole of the first day but look at Tora, who, although her back was turned towards her, could not keep quiet, but twisted and turned as though she could feel the other's eyes on her neck. The more restless Tora became, the more calmly Milla studied her. At home, in the sitting-room, stood a head of the young Augustus in marble, it had been Milla's admiration from childhood. And now there it was, on a girl's body, on the bench before her, moving in brightness and colour.

The brow was exactly the same, the whole shape of the head, broad above; the curve of the cheeks and chin, the arch of the eyebrows the same, all the same! The eyes were different and more full of life, for those of the Augustus gave the impression of dulness, or at least heaviness. These sparkled incessantly in changing shades of blue-grey, under long dark eyelashes. The mouth was full and curved, the hair black-brown, or brown-black, as the light fell upon it. The complexion was a sort of pale olive. Milla had no words to express it; it was a combination she had never seen before. There was a large, very large birth-mark on her cheek, perhaps it was that which disturbed her, for she never turned that cheek when she looked round at Milla. Her figure was developed, very strong and statuesque. Apparently she was a little over sixteen. She did not look well at the moment, she was flushed and had dark lines under her eyes; the perspiration stood on her face.

Her whole appearance was striking; Milla looked at her without a trace of envy; what taste this new girl had, beyond anything she had ever seen; how much she must know!

Every now and then Milla looked at her next neighbour. Anna sat there, spare and angular, her thin, blue, and inordinately long fingers especially occupied Milla to-day. What a contrast!

Should she speak to the new-comer, be friendly to her? Perhaps it would be a little forward. From the moment that she saw her during the next "recreation," walking arm-in-arm with Nora, this idea was dropped as a matter of course.

During the three weeks which preceded Milla's return, a good deal had happened; a revolution had silently begun which was not yet at an end.

Tora Holm made her appearance in the school rather untowardly. She arrived late, met no one in the hall, and did not know where to go; every one was assembled in the "laboratory" for morning prayers. At that moment Karl Vangen, who had been detained at the bedside of a sick person, rushed in and almost overturned her; then became as confused as only a young clergyman can, mistook her for the new teacher, and bewildered himself and her by his embarrassment. It was therefore some little time before she, in her Bergen sing-song, could explain who she was, and when he heard it, and it flashed into his mind that she was in trouble for her uncle's death and had returned to an unhappy home, he broke out, "We will all be so kind to you here; so"—he seized her hand—"welcome, welcome!" Before he could say more she began to cry. She was nervous and timid, everything was new and strange. He could think of nothing else to do than to open the door and call out "Mother."

And out came Fru Rendalen with her spectacles awry, and asked rather shortly (for Fru Rendalen was particular, and this should not have happened), "What is it, Karl?"

"Here is Fröken Holm, custom-house officer Holm's daughter, mother."

"Very well, let her come in," answered Fru Rendalen, opening the door wide. "How do you do?" she said as she stood in the doorway and held out her hand to Tora in the half-lighted hall. There was far too much of a command in her tone for Tora not to advance. Fru Rendalen then saw that she had come crying to school like a little thing of five years old. She was surprised; she showed her a place, which Tora shyly took, and asked one of the teachers to help her off with her hat and cloak, which the little donkey had kept on—thought Fru Rendalen to herself.

They sang a hymn and Karl spoke about meeting—when-ever one discovers anything good in a person, one meets God—that was his subject.

At the moment Tora was only conscious of the sound of a powerful voice, she was tormented by the remembrance of her unlucky entrance and the impression it had made; first and foremost upon Fru Rendalen, but also on the others, she had seen that plainly; she could not keep quiet, she turned away when any one looked at her, turned this way and that

as though she wished both to be looked at, and not to be looked at. If any one spoke to her, which happened after a while, she coloured, and answered something which she at once contradicted. This went on during the first three days. She knew neither Norwegian geography nor Norwegian history—indeed, she did not know a single thing except English and French, and coloured up when this was discovered; but when it was also discovered that she spoke both these languages fluently, she coloured up just as much. She would not do gymnastics on any consideration—at last she said she had no dress. She made herself one which was a masterpiece of coquetry; but this she denied, and declared it to be purely and simply ugly. She could not go on long with the gymnastics, strongly built as she was, but gave in completely and began to cry. Miss Hall, who superintended the gymnastics and introduced special exercises for some of the girls, led her towards the window and looked at her. Miss Hall had partly forgotten her Norse, and did not remember at the moment that Tora spoke English; she tried to find a word while she examined her. Tora misunderstood this and ran away from her, put on her things and went straight home, refusing to return to school. It required no little trouble before she could be brought back, not only to school but as a boarder; she needed better food than she got at home, for she was beginning in chlorosis; this was the word that Miss Hall could not remember. Tora now shared Miss Hall's room; she was the first, though afterwards one of the pupils always did so.

Little by little the new-comer forgot herself so far as to be able to sit still, but never if any one looked at her steadily, or talked about her. She must feel it in her back, her companions said. They tried experiments and laughed when she really did by degrees become uneasy, and at last turned round and looked at them.

Nora had been a boarder during the past year and was often up at the school. She did not speak to Tora except just in passing, but one Sunday Tora asked her if she might do her hair for her. This made as much stir among the boarders as though she had offered Nora some new hair. Word was sent from room to room; they all collected, big ones and little ones, to see Nora with new hair. They stood there, they leaned over one another, while the great work went on.

For what was done was nothing less ; laughter soon changed to astonishment, to admiration, to applause.

One day, when Nora's hair was untidy, Tora had suddenly noticed that this was becoming to her. It suited the large, wide, open eyes, by far the most striking part of her little face. She had next to no forehead, very small cheeks, a little mouth with cherry lips, and a rather large nose, a real family nose ; but it only seemed to set off the eyes, so that it was the eyes all the same—nothing but eyes. Now what was wanted was some way of raising the hair, so that it should help the eyes as well. Tora had seen a great deal, and often had "inspirations," but never as yet in hair-dressing. She had one now. Naturally she began by letting it all down and combing it out, then took the front hair and made it into two large rolls, one on each side, lightly twisted ; it was very little in itself, and not at all striking, but the effect in this case was amazing. When her eyes grew large, the hair looked as though it would spread its wings and fly away, sometimes almost as though it flickered—the hair was naturally a little wavy.

Up to this time Nora had never been thought pretty, there were other qualities in her which one noticed ; but now Rendalen himself, who very rarely looked closely at any one, stopped short as he was reading aloud, when, chancing to raise his eyes, he caught sight of Nora ; the whole class knew what he thought. The one who was least concerned was perhaps Nora herself ; now she had settled about her hair, and she need not think anything more about it ; but when Tora Holm, as their friendship increased, began to rave about her talents, and, with her tendency towards exaggeration, declared that Nora was "all soul," that her music "absolutely carried one away," and that her chance remarks always "hit the right nail on the head," that really was something ! She longed for more with insatiable voracity, and cultivated the friendship. Tora Holm constantly made discoveries ; the most important one was that Nora was always right, even if she had been capricious towards others, hasty—nay, even when she had had a slight fit of untruthfulness, Nora was right, quite right—at the bottom.

It now struck Nora that Tora Holm was the first person who had ever thoroughly understood her : to think that a

stranger who looked at her with fresh impartial eyes should have discovered this at once! The more they saw of each other, the more gifted they thought each other. Tora's talent for telling stories was the "greatest" Nora had "ever known;" she gathered all her set round her to listen, and the story-telling began. Fairy tales and romances by turns—what had not Tora read, what did she not remember? The girls would listen over and over again to the "Thousand and One Nights" (not the condensed edition, but the full one) as though they were little children. As well as this, they liked pictures of real life which did not go beyond their comprehension, though they preferred that the lovers (and by inference also themselves) should be noble and unhappy. These girls of fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen (Tora herself was nearly seventeen), for various reasons had, outside their school subjects, read only by stealth, with the results which naturally follow. The books which Rendalen had read to them had greatly widened their horizon and increased their desire to know more, so that Tora was doubly welcome.

But between the story-telling times Nora wished to have her to herself, really to possess her; Nora-Tora, Tora-Nora, wove themselves together, no one else could approach them. Nora announced this openly; they two preferred being by themselves.

Every one knew Nora, and understood that in a few days it would be over; they only laughed, but there was one who did not laugh.

Tinka Hansen could not endure faithlessness; she had taken Nora to task on one or two occasions and warned her. This time she was silent, and allowed the penalty to consist in punctiliously respecting their wish to remain apart. Nora could never get her to come with her.

Very soon Nora began to feel lonely among all these delightful Oriental palaces; she did not realise this till she discovered that without Tinka she did not feel free to do as she liked, without her she dared not always listen. Tora's romances were often very "French." For more than a year Nora had been used to the limits which Tinka imposed. She was not sure if she were now inside or outside them, and an uneasy conscience was the result. Tora had to suffer for this; Nora did not know what they ought to do; she preemptorily cut short a story which had been begun,

ordered another, but stopped that as well ; made promises and did not keep them, and felt bored. And it was just at the beginning of this period that Milla returned to school.

One Thursday evening, in Fru Rendalen's room, Tomas was going to read a new play to them. Tora Holm, who chanced to be near Milla, looked at her new black dress, which was a different one from that she wore in the schoolroom. Without touching the dress she said, showing with her fingers what she meant, the "trimming ought to have gone so, not so, and had better have been narrower." She did not wait for an answer, but walked further on and sat down.

The day after, before morning prayers began, Milla came up to her and thanked her ; she had tried it and found that Tora was right. There was no time for more, but during the first "recreation" they involuntarily sought each other out. "How could you see that at once?" asked Milla.

"I tried it the other day on a doll," answered Tora.

"On a doll?" asked Milla with a slight blush. Tora felt that she ought not to have let this out ; she was always doubtful about what she ought to do. What a delicate instinct Milla Engel must have, to blush on her account !

"So you dress dolls, do you?" said Milla smiling, as she passed her the next day. Tora protested : it really was not clear what she protested, whether it were that she had one or two dolls, or that it was her sisters who had them, or that even married women often have dolls, so that there could be nothing odd in that, or else that she quite saw how unbecoming it was since every age ought to suit with its . . . . She said all this, and a great deal more, in her Bergen sing-song, and Milla smiled. "Won't you come in and see me this afternoon? We are back from the country now."

Tora had not refused before Milla had said good-bye, but afterwards she felt dreadfully embarrassed about it. Nevertheless at six o'clock she was there.

Tora had a great wish to get up in the world—she would not be chained to a home such as hers was, to such a fate as threatened her.

Consul Engel's house was almost the only one in the town where the door was kept closed all day. When one rang, either a man-servant or a maid opened the door, and one entered a house where there was Brussels carpet in the

passages and on the stairs, as well as in the rooms, and where, to begin with, one found oneself between two mirrors where one could see oneself from head to foot.

Tora was shown upstairs. "Fröken Engel's" room was there. She was heartily welcomed. The rooms were those which Fru Engel had occupied during the last years of her life; she had very rarely left them.

She had died here, and it was for that reason that the family had gone so late into the country this year, and had only just returned to the house.

Every comfort which a room can possess was there; the chairs and couches were all as soft as the cushions of an invalid, you seemed to sink into them; they were upholstered in moss-green silk, and the curtains and portières were of the same material and colour, the walls were a dark indefinite colour. There was an old-fashioned rosewood cabinet in inlaid work, with a number of small pigeon-holes and receptacles in it. Tora never wearied of looking at it. An Erard piano with carved heads and emblems, a bookcase in the same style. Pictures, especially landscapes, which made one long for the evening sun, with its hazy light and almost sultry heat.

Tora went from one to another, she looked at every single thing as though it were a person with whom she wished to make friends. From there she went to the bedroom, and admired the soft carpet into which her feet sank, the little *chaise-longue* in one corner, the bed with its rich hangings, the variety and elegance of the toilette apparatus. Milla's pleasure at seeing her was expressed in the one remark that she had never before taken any one up into her mother's rooms.

There was only one piece of furniture which did not please Tora; at last she could no longer contain herself, it assorted so ill with its surroundings. "What is there in that press, dear? Why is it here?" Milla replied, smiling, that it was very incongruous, she knew; it had not been there before—in fact, it was her own, she had had it ever since she was a child.

"But can't it stand in another place?"

"No, not very well."

There was something of reserve in this answer, she could not inquire further. As Tora was leaving Milla asked her to come again soon, but she had better let her know before-

hand, so that they might be alone—that would be the pleasantest. Tora understood that this was meant for Anna Rogne, but that was no affair of hers.

It so chanced that the next time she sat telling stories in the twilight to Nora and her friends, who for convenience had settled themselves on the floor on some carpets and eider-downs, she let fall the remark, that "Of all the people I know, the one who is most like Gulnare is Milla Engel." This, to her audience, was much like saying before the king that he was not the wisest man in the kingdom. Nora was amazed, her friends almost broke out into open anger. Tora felt that she had done a foolish thing; she tried to explain herself by ascribing that "passive" beauty to Milla which was here implied. The expressions active and passive were at that time war-cries in the senior class; there were "active" people and "passive" people, "active" eyes and "passive" eyes, "active" and "passive" colours.

"But, good gracious," said one of the girls, "Milla has not dark hair; she is fair."

"So is Nora," answered the thoughtless Tora.

"I certainly have no wish to be a passive beauty, or an Eastern princess," answered Nora angrily.

"No, I did not mean that at all, I only meant——" she stopped short, for she really did not know why she had said it.

"That was sheer nonsense," the others declared, and pressed Tora so hard that she declared, with tears in her eyes, that Milla was the most refined and the prettiest girl in the school. She (Tora) was only too happy to know any one who was so considerate, so full of tact; it was more than could be said of every one.

This was too much. Gina Krog herself, who was always forbearing, did not now scruple to announce that she had known for two days, but had not wished to tell, that Tora went to see Milla and that they were bosom friends. There was a dead silence. Soon afterwards Nora left, and the others dispersed. Tora tried to explain, but they would not listen to her.

None of the boarders belonged to Milla's party; not a girl there had set her foot inside Milla Engel's door—for the reason that they had never been asked.

However much Tora tossed about and turned herself and



her pillow that night, she could not sleep, it vexed and hurt her that she could not be friends with one without losing the friendship of the other. Now the whole school would look on her as a faithless wretch. Heaven knew that she was not, yet she might be sent to Coventry for it, it might always be remembered against her. It was a question of the future for her. She had been so tossed about, she felt so insecure, she was always stretching out her arms for something solid to cling to, which as constantly eluded her grasp. She cried bitterly, she liked them both so much, each in her own way, though they were so different. Why should she not if she liked? What could she do? She did not wish to sacrifice either of them.

The next day was Sunday; she had to go to church, but she would not wait for the others, who were going as well—so she went straight off to Milla. Milla was dressed for church; they met in the hall, but she was surprised when Tora asked if she might speak to her. She took her into her room and locked the door. Tora began to cry and told her everything exactly as it had happened; she did not conceal that she was fond of them both and why she was so, nor how lonely she felt, and what an effect this might have on her future. Nora had so much influence both among the boarders and the day girls.

In the midst of the story, just as Tora had paused for a moment to cry, Milla heard some one at the door; there was a knock, she opened it just wide enough to step through; in a little time she returned and said that she and Anna Rogne had made an engagement to go to church together, but that she had excused herself on the score of a headache; it was certainly the second Sunday that she had done so, but it could not be helped; Milla was sorry for Tora, she really was fond of her, it showed itself now. She promised not to take anything in bad part which Tora might devise, so as to keep on good terms with Nora and her numerous friends. Milla really was very sweet.

Tora had only time to put her arms round her and kiss her for this, for she must show herself in church. But might she come again in the afternoon? She was very much consoled, but she longed for more; she was so frightened, she must manage to talk everything over with her. Milla asked her to come again as early as ever she could.

Tora came again after coffee ; as soon as she had locked the door, Milla whispered, as she put her arm round Tora's neck, that now she was going to give her a treat, she felt certain that it would please her. To no one, absolutely to no one, had she shown what Tora was going to see. The press there——

"The press, well——?"

"Once it held my dolls."

"Your dolls!"

"Every one knows that it does not now," said Milla ; as she spoke she flung it open. The large double doors, both the upper and lower ones, flew back together, and the girls could see four stories of a house ; the bottom one a complete and marvellously dainty kitchen, scullery and dining-room, above a drawing-room, a large elegant apartment with the most lovely furniture upholstered in silk, a black rosewood table, fireplace, looking-glass, clock. On the third story a bedroom, with the sweetest little beds—real actual beds—and a wash-hand stand, where everything was to be found, down to the most minute details. On the fourth story was the wardrobe, a magnificent doll's wardrobe. There were changes in silk, velvet, *moiré antique*, in different colours ; a whole collection of materials which had not yet been made up ; scraps of every description evidently collected with diligence and care during many years. And linen, even stockings, and other underclothing, all in duplicate, as well as hats, mantles, ornaments, belts.

Tora shrieked ; she was down on her knees and up on tip-toe ; she did not at first lay a finger on them, but devoured them with her eyes, unable to take in the whole—it could not be grasped all at once, there was too much, too great a variety, it was too wonderfully minute. She had not even counted the dolls yet. "One, two, three, four—five—six ! seven !! eight !!!"

She had begun softly, but her voice rose at every number, so that Milla hastened to say, "Twelve, twelve, there are twelve."

"Twelve ! actually twelve ! Oh dear ! oh dear ! Have you kept all the dolls you have ever had in your life, never spoilt a single one ?"

Well, yes she had, but never one since she was seven.

"Wait a minute." And solemnly as though she were afraid they might disappear, Tora carefully put in her hand and took up the very, very sweetest big doll in light red silk, with shoes and hat of the same colour, a dark red parasol, and a little fan stuck into her belt ; her underclothes were made like a real person's, with lace and embroidery, a pocket in her dress with a pocket-handkerchief in it, and elegant French gloves which fitted her hands ; as well a little brooch shaped like a forget-me-not, and bracelets and watch in the same style. Tora stood dumb with admiration, while she turned the doll round, inspected the cut and make of the dress, the underclothes ; held it away from her, then close to her. At that moment there was a knock at the door. Some one had come right upstairs without the preoccupied girls having heard the least sound. They were startled. Milla held up her finger. She turned red and white. Of course it was Anna. But Anna had never seen the dolls, she would not understand.

There were, she explained later, two more dolls in mourning, but Anna had been with her so much lately that she had not been able to dress many of them, otherwise her plan had been to have them all in mourning, that would have been charming. Another knock, low and hesitating. They held their breaths, Milla was quite unnerved. They heard her go ; they listened so intently that they could hear her step on the stairs. It was a most unlucky chance. Milla had given orders that if any one beside Tora came, they were to say that she had gone out for a walk on account of her headache. But the maid who had received the order, Milla's own maid, could not have answered the door, although it was her time for doing so. What should Milla do ? But from this consideration she was swept away by a whirlwind.

Nora lay on the bed in Tinka Hansen's room ; a little wainscoted, blue-painted attic in shoemaker Hansen's new house in the market-place. As well as the bed there was an open bookshelf painted brown, one or two chairs, a large wash-hand stand intended for two, but for which no other place could be found ; a high short sofa on which Tinka now sat, looking across at the bed, her right arm resting on her little desk which stood on the table before her.

Nora lay sobbing loudly, and Tinka sat calmly by and

looked at her ; Nora knew now what faithlessness was, how it tasted to be deserted for the sake of another.

But it was more than being forsaken—she was abandoned, deposed, made nothing of. Tora had lifted her up to the skies; she was “all mind,” “could not make a mistake.” And now this very Tora had dropped her—for Milla Engel! The world was nothing but lies and delusions. “Oh dear! Tinka, why cannot you be kind to me? You do not know how unhappy I am.” But Tinka was silent. “I cannot do without you, Tinka—no, I cannot. I have discovered since this morning that I made nothing but mistakes. I have no stability—no, not a bit.”

“No, that is it,” said Tinka soothingly.

“Not a bit; oh dear, what shall I do? Won’t you talk to me?” She cried dreadfully now.

“You only care for adoration, Nora.”

“Not ‘only,’ Tinka; don’t say ‘only.’”

“No, no; but you are never happy unless you are adored, and one tires of that.”

“What shall I do, Tinka? Goodness knows I am tired of it myself. Ah, you do not believe it, but it’s true, especially now since Milla is adored as well. Ugh! it is disgusting to think of.”

“That is merely because it is Milla, and not you.”

“No indeed, Tinka,” and she raised herself on her elbow. “Tora has given me so much of it that I am tired of it; yes, I am; and to think that she is with Milla now.” She flung herself down again and cried with anger and vexation. She raised herself again suddenly: “But I must get rid of all this; it is disgusting; I despise myself; you do not know what I have been thinking since this morning. Help me, Tinka; you are the only one of them all who speaks the truth to me.”

Tinka was unmoved: Nora flung herself down again, turned away and cried.

“I cannot understand,” said Tinka at length, “that you who rave so for——”

“Do not use that word”—Nora interrupted her while she made a gesture with her hand behind her—“it has become loathsome now that Milla does it too. Milla ‘raves.’ Can you imagine anything so——?”

“Well, well, I will not say ‘rave.’”

"No, don't."

"Very well, I will say 'interest yourself'—you who interest yourself so much in all that is just and great, and who are also so brave, for you would cheerfully die for what you think right——"

"Yes, I could, Tinka; I believe I could do that; ah, how nice it is to hear something good again, and especially from you; I feel quite astray."

"Yes, but now I am coming to what I want to say—do you understand? Is it not a shame that any one so excellent should all the same be such a peacock?"

"A peacock, Tinka?"

"Yes, a peacock; you are just like a peacock!"

"Am I? I think you are——"

"It was not I who said so."

"I thought as much."

"It was Tora who said so."

"Tora! the ungrateful——"

"Yes, but Tora is right; you are dreadfully like a peacock, Nora; that thin little face of yours, and then you are so slender."

"Come, I say, Tinka."

"Yes, it's true. All we friends agree as to that. We are all to be the eyes in your tail. Yes, that is it."

Nora threw herself down and howled, with her head and hands in the eider-down quilt.

"Yes, of course you have offended Tora—you offend every one. You are so capricious, you are so spoilt."

"Yes, that is what I am!" came from the eider-down.

"That is what you are. Frederik says so as well."

"What does Frederik say?"

Nora raised her red face quickly up from the eider-down. Frederik was an authority.

"I will read it to you," answered the other, opening the desk, and taking out a letter of at least five sheets.

"He writes," she said, as she turned to the fourth side of the fourth sheet, with the same calm deliberation with which she had opened the desk, looked for the letter, closed the desk again, and now read: "You must not be too severe with her either, for if that were her real nature, she would behave differently, and understand how to retain her worshippers. As it is, she is only a spoilt child, who has

never done anything without being praised for it, and has besides become so capricious that she is tired to-day of those who praised her yesterday."

"Oh dear! how true that is, Tinka."

"But perhaps she will weary of caprice as well, for she certainly desires something more than that. I was impressed by that in the summer. But you must help her, Tinka."

"Yes, you must."

Nora had raised herself, and now sat on the edge of the bed. She had folded her hands, and looked at Tinka. "You must always be with me. I am not content with myself, when you are not with me. Oh Tinka! I will never, never, never be like that again. If you see the slightest sign of it, you must take me to task for it. You know I do want to be something more than this. I want to be remarkable. Ah! don't laugh, in reality I have no wish to sing and make fun for the others, and be flattered and flattered; but it came so, I can't understand why. I don't want it, I wish to be able to do something, to take up something with an object. *Yes, that is what I want.* Sometimes I believe I must go off to the wars, or die with the Nihilists in Russia. Yes, I do believe it. Or else travel about and lecture; be hissed down and wounded. Yes, I could. I don't know why it should be, but I long for it. I don't say it to boast, Tinka, I only say it because I feel it so. Believe me, I do feel it in that way. If I fail, it will be because it is nothing but wishing; perhaps I am incapable of it. Well, all the same I have the wish. I have no wish for the sort of thing I do now, and for which I am praised. I have such an unconquerably strong, strong, strong longing."

She raised herself, her eyes sparkled through her tears; her hair stood on end, she had dishevelled it with her long arms whilst she was crying. She threw herself down again. Tinka could not resist all the pleasant remembrances which Nora had awakened. She walked across and bent her broad full figure over her. And there they sat for some time together, talking that endearing nonsense which is proper to the happiness of reconciliation. Tinka did not forget all that she had treasured in her memory for Nora's benefit, but the sting of it was gone. Nora's lively answers made it all appear stupid, and at last she was ready to laugh at

what a little time before had seemed something very serious, immensely important.

In the midst of this, some one rushed up the stairs, step by step up the first flight, like the beat of a drum. Then up the second, then the third, across to the attic, in the same wild, unflagging whirl. There was only one who ever came in that fashion, but it could not very well be she. The door was not locked; there was no knock; it was pushed open. Yes, it was Tora! Good heavens!

The amazement, vexation, dignity of the two girls! It could not have been done better at Court. Tinka's perfect unconsciousness that there could be such a person as Tora Holm in the world; or Nora's noble and spiritual, "Don't disturb me," without a word spoken. It was splendid! Never did so fine a representation more utterly break down. Tora was beaming with delight, victory, and rejoicing. She talked about *twelve* dolls, some of which were as big as an ordinary child; of—she really believed—*fifty* dolls' dresses of different sorts, *moiré antique*, silk and velvet, beside morning dresses, embroidered skirts and drawers, silk stockings, gloves and parasols; of beds and curtains; of a wash-hand stand, with all belonging to it, down to the most minute details; of everything from the kitchen to the drawing-room, and the drawing-room furniture, of a splendid plan about the dolls, who were all to go to a Court Ball on the King's birthday; about Milla, who was a hundred thousand times better than they dreamed of, who did not object, nay wished, that they should both come up with her and see it all now, at once, and help about the Court Ball—of course as the deepest of secrets. Yes, it was true; on her word of honour it was true. She told them how it had all happened; about Milla's room, what it was like, and that she had been there a number of times without hearing a word about the dolls. But to-day Milla had shown them to her, merely out of the goodness of her heart to comfort her. Now she wanted to show them to the others, if it could be managed, and all four be friends from this time forward.

Tora had proposed it; Milla had been startled, but she had come round, and at last thought it a capital plan. Milla was so good, and they must be so too; no hesitation—they must. Why should there be two parties? Milla had her ways, Nora hers.

They had never really done each other any harm, not the least bit; if they would only try to grasp the fact: "we can talk more about it as we go."

The two looked at each other, but Tora gave them no breathing time; "We must tell them at home that we are going to stay to tea, for that was what was meant. It would never do to refuse an invitation, a formal invitation, to the Engels."

Tora was a perfect whirlwind, carrying all before her, and the storm of excitement had brought fire to her eyes, her movements—she seemed to sparkle. She took possession of them.

Not long afterwards they all four stood before the press; the introduction, the embarrassment from the change of circumstances, apologies, counter-apologies, occupied the first few minutes; Tora took hold of Milla and pushed her gently forward to the front of the press.

"Open! open!—we can talk afterwards—open!" Milla herself felt that here action was better than words, and opened the door.

The cry of delight which was given by the new-comers fully rewarded her.

There was an amount of industry, order, loyalty and sense of beauty in this little collection which she was aware of herself, and which made it dear to her heart. It was her treasure, never seen by many people, and for the last two or three years only by herself; there was therefore a special charm of secrecy in it; it would be enjoyed when some day it was opened before the astonished eyes of others. And now, how it was enjoyed!

Each one found a special pleasure in it. Tinka looked upon the dolls as so many little children, she talked baby talk to them: "Doodness dacious" for "Goodness gracious," and "tweet" for "sweet." She began to undress one for the pleasure of dressing it again.

Tora delighted in the stuffs, felt each one, held them up against the light, laid them one against the other. There was a special piece of brocade which she now saw for the first time (Milla looked it out for her), which absolutely enraptured her; it suggested plan upon plan, she talked without a pause. Nora regarded the press as a collection of works of art. Milla became a new person in her eyes.



It was evident what she thought of her now, one saw it in Milla's slightly heightened colour.

They treated each other the whole evening with a distinction which the others considered as only natural.

They were soon all sitting round the table with the dolls shared among them; the materials and everything which could be of use for this great object, a Court Ball, lay scattered before them, and eight eyes and forty fingers rummaged among them. They could not agree; Tora wished to have a costume ball, her endless chatter filled the air with fancies and varying colours, a perfect whirl of figures of damsels and *rococo* dames with ribbons, feathers, and hats. Milla preferred the present day, the fashion plates, especially some quite new ones.

Nora was sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, according as some special thing took her fancy. Tinka opposed the idea; they could each one dress her doll according to her own fancy. Nora and Tora rebelled against this; there ought to be some style in it. Milla dealt with the proposal with more deliberation, but was against it. Nora quickly grew impatient at this, and then by a sleight of hand, which only girls understand, this discussion turned into a dispute about—Tomas Rendalen and Karl Vangen! Not between Tinka and the others; but Tora against Nora and Tinka. Tora being herself nervous, could not endure Rendalen's nervousness. It was either this, or that she was inclined to be in opposition; otherwise it cannot be explained how it was, that from the first day she had been unable to get on with Rendalen. A speaking resemblance between a red-spotted stuff and Rendalen's hands had started the dispute. Nora had hastily answered that his hands were clever, really speaking hands; Vangen's, on the contrary, were "big and stupid, as broad at one end as the other."

When there are only two masculine teachers in a girls' school, the pupils very rarely praise both—one must be censured when the other is applauded; and at school it was generally honest Karl Vangen who was used as a foil, whenever any one felt inclined to become enthusiastic over the intellectual Rendalen.

But on this point Tora was in opposition from the moment when Karl Vangen had grasped her hand in warm

welcome, and had beamed down at her with his kind eyes, and besides had made their meeting the text of his address that day—since then she had been fond of him. And the more awkward and simple he was, the more she liked him—she fought for him until the others were forced to respect her.

This time it began very mildly, they merely taunted her with Karl Vangen's "thick head," his wide mouth, his long fingers, long legs and big feet; and she replied with allusions to Rendalen's red hair, screwed-up eyes, his feminine preciseness, his scented handkerchief; but it soon became more serious. Tora's quick wit cited instances of Rendalen's uncontrolled impetuosity, and what mistakes he made in consequence. Instances of his uneven temper—how sometimes he rushed up and down the class without speaking, without hearing, without seeing; at other times he was nothing but life, absolutely given up to fun—far too much so. The others considered that this was unjust, because if this were mentioned by itself, no one would have the least idea of Rendalen, who was, for all that, the best and cleverest teacher in the world. Tinka had a capricious talent for mimicry and not the slightest leaning towards piety, so that Karl Vangen very easily appeared to her in a ludicrous light; she now began to preach, or rather to bleat, like him, with eyes gazing fixedly heavenwards. Nora laughed violently, Tora cried, Milla could not prevent herself from laughing, but all the same, she now took Kari Vangen's part; she quietly remarked that she thought him "delightful"; she did not mention Rendalen. As Milla was the hostess and Nora and Tinka at her house for the first time, they said no more; but Tora would not give in; she now seriously began to sing Karl Vangen's praises. In order not to answer and admit that there might be some truth in it, Nora walked away humming and looked out of the window. "Good gracious! why there goes Anna Rogne," she said.

"Has she been here?" asked Milla, turning pale; she got up and came towards the window. Yes, certainly she saw Anna hurrying away, she must be much disturbed; she herself, with as much speed as was becoming, hastened out of the door and down the stairs. Some time elapsed before she returned. She was silent and really upset; Anna had

been right upstairs and therefore outside their door. There was general astonishment. Milla told them what had happened that morning, and how innocent she really was in the matter. Tora at once took it upon herself and was terribly unhappy.

"No, the blame is mine alone," said Milla.

What should she do? she had ordered the carriage.

No one answered, but they looked involuntarily at Tinka.

"Yes," said Tinka, "we will all go together to fetch Anna and explain to her how it happened." Nora and Tora agreed at once that that was the only right thing to do. Milla, too, admitted that this would be best, but she had never said anything to Anna about the dolls; Anna did not care for such things, and now it could not very well be explained to her without offence. Nora and Tora were sensible of this; it would not do.

Tinka held to her opinion; she would gladly undertake it by herself.

No; if any one were to do so it should be Milla.

This put the idea into Milla's head to write. Simply say to Anna that the others were here, would she not come too? She sent the carriage. Yes, the others thought that would do.

"Go yourself!" said Tinka.

"No, I am not so discourteous as that to my guests," laughed Milla. She sat down to write.

The others were quiet for a time; at last Nora broke in with, "Tinka is certainly right; go yourself, we can easily go out just for that time."

"No," answered Milla, looking up from her letter; "Anna need not know that we saw her. Then it would be the most natural thing in the world for me to send a message to her when you are here." The others could not contradict this. She finished off the note and hurried down with it; as she came up again they heard the carriage drive out of the gate, at the side of the house. Milla smiled; "I said I would explain another time why you had come. I told Hans to be quick and to drive a little way round so as not to pass Anna, perhaps the carriage will be there before she is." It was evident that she was pleased at having proved equal to a difficult occasion.

They resumed their discussion on the dolls' festival; but

before the carriage returned with Anna, the dolls and their things must be back in the press.

Suddenly Nora broke out: "If we are not to mention the dolls to Anna, why in the world could we not have all gone to her together?"

They looked puzzled at each other for a moment. It was true! They burst out laughing. What had given them the mad idea that for them all to go together would be to let out the secret of the dolls. They tried to recall the course of their conversation, but could not determine it; at all events it showed that they had uneasy consciences. Tinka proposed in good time to put away the dolls, their wardrobe and stuffs, under Milla's superintendence; but Milla undertook to put the whole thing tidy later on, they could sit quiet while she did so. They all objected to this; it would be awfully amusing to put them away. And so it was settled.

The carriage returned without Anna—she had a headache. Tora looked at Milla, and Milla at Tora; this was a final good-bye. It put them all out of tune for a little while, but when they remembered that at all events they could take the dolls out again, the three guests soon consoled themselves.

As soon as they had got to work, the conversation naturally turned upon Anna; none of the three liked her, they thought her artificial, *prétentieuse*, as Tora expressed it in rather affected French; Anna was always trying to take up some special line; everything she said, or did, must be so dreadfully thorough. But they all agreed that she wrote well; it was true, for the two things went naturally together.

They then began to make fun of her extreme piety. Milla had said nothing about the first; as regarded the second, she contented herself by remarking that she had perhaps a little too much of it.

Nora was the first to forsake the table. She could not go on any longer, she must have a little music, she said. The grand piano was tried, Milla was afraid that it was not quite in tune; nor was it, but what a tone! Nora sang, while the others dressed dolls; then she worried Tinka to join her, but at first Tinka would not leave her blue doll; at last Milla asked her to do so. They had sung one or two songs when there was a knock at the door. Milla's maid announced

that the Consul had arrived; there was great surprise, he was not expected. Milla hurried down. The others all agreed at once that they must go, it would be dull work having tea with the Consul. Tora especially shrank from it, her cuffs were not quite clean; would it do to ask Milla to lend her a pair? During this discussion the door was opened, in came Milla, quicker than any one believed it possible for her to move. "Father's coming," she whispered, and hurried to the table with the others after her. From there to the press, from the press to the table, from the table to the press; heads and shoulders were knocked together, toes trodden on, amid smothered cries, laughter and scolding; everything was off the table and locked up as the Consul knocked at the door. Nora had pushed Tinka on to the sofa, she herself sat gravely on a chair, Milla and Tora stood by the press. The Consul came in, elegant and smiling as usual. He saw the four girls red with suppressed laughter, or whatever it might be, embarrassed, constrained. "What the deuce is it?" he thought, and came forward to Nora, the Sheriff's daughter, bowed politely, bade her welcome, and asked after her parents; then to the others as Milla introduced them, and then back again to Nora; he asked merrily if he might have the pleasure of taking her downstairs. He had just come from the steamer, and was as hungry as one only can be after a sea voyage.

She took his arm, but he wished the others to go first, which they hesitated to do, it seemed as though one were waiting for the other. Tinka could not understand why Tora did not move, and when the Consul turned towards her again she came forward, although it was rather embarrassing. Why did not Milla help her? She stood there too, as though she had taken root. The Consul gave his daughter a little push: "*Avancez, mesdemoiselles.*" She was obliged to come a little forward and the lower part of a doll became visible! It lay there, "naked and face downwards," as the song says. Tora tried to cover it up, but the Consul had caught sight of it, and with a "pardon me, Fröken," he stooped and picked it up. Tora ran, Tinka ran, Milla ran, Nora let go his arm and ran, and the Consul after them with the doll. "What is this—what in the world is this?"

They all rushed into the dining-room and stood there in a group, convulsed with laughter, as the Consul followed

them with the doll in the air like a flag. It was the blue doll which Tinka had undressed for the third time, and was going to put to bed just as the Consul came and everything was hurry-scurry. It must have slipped down and bashfully hidden itself under a skirt at the time the press was closed. Milla and Tora had discovered it at the same moment, and both placed themselves over it.

The Consul sat down with the doll in his arms, then he laid it down in his table napkin, and after looking at it once or twice he put it on the table with a teacup under its head. Milla snatched it from him.

"Do you really play with dolls?"

No, indeed, they had come to consult together about Christmas presents. Milla gave this answer.

"Why should you hide such a harmless thing?" asked the Consul.

"Because the doll was undressed, of course," answered his daughter. Nora soon joined in, she was used to this sort of thing, she also had a father who loved to tease girls.

The other two took but little part, but as against that, the Consul kept his eyes on them almost continually. Tinka could quite understand that Tora might attract his attention, but why should she? She grew uneasy by degrees. Her dress might have come unsewn somewhere near the arm, it happened so to her sometimes; she looked as well as she could, but failed to discover anything; she felt as though she had no dress on at all.

The Consul was very merry; suddenly he turned all his attention to Tora, they had only been a short time at table and she had finished already! The fact was that the unlucky cuffs worried Tora to such an extent that they ran between her and her wits. The Consul looked at her suddenly; it was not the birth-mark that he was looking at, for she had been careful to have that side next to Milla; it was certainly not her face, his looks were directed lower than that. She put down her knife and fork and hid her hands under the table.

"You are not eating, my dear Fröken Holm; are you not well, missie? What's amiss with you? Or is there anything particular you want? Just say what it is. Milla, give Fröken Holm another cup of tea. No tea either? A glass of wine? Come now, just a glass of wine. Your good

health, Fröken ! But you won't drink any ? Do you prefer Madeira ? Good gracious, are you blushing about it ? Headache ? Dear, dear ! Perhaps you would like—— ? Shall Milla help you ? Not that either ? Just say what you want, my dear. Have you often a headache, Fröken Holm ? What, you have not got one ? I once knew a girl, who would have a headache merely if something were amiss with her cuffs. But my dear Milla, I do not want to tease Fröken Holm. Is that what it is, Fröken Holm ? ”

Tora was overcome by a feeling of helplessness which would seize her for even a smaller cause than this, and which always made her cry. She had to leave the table and hasten upstairs.

Milla rose with a dignity which her friends admired, and followed her. When the others joined her, Tora was gone. Milla looked pale, but was completely silent as to what had passed. Nora and Tinka began to put on their things, Milla making no objection. She kissed them and begged them to come again, repeating her invitation down in the hall. It was only when she was upstairs alone, and had locked the door, that she burst into tears. Such a thing would never have happened if her mother had been at table, she could not fill her place ; her father had vexed her terribly. Her mother had left her so much too soon. “ Oh, mother, mother, mother ! ” There was a knock at the door. She asked who it was. Her father ; of course she had to open, but she went back to the sofa and flung herself crying into the furthest corner. He sat down quietly, and after a few moments he said very gently, almost in a whisper, “ Listen, Milla ; I am sorry for what has happened, I wish I knew better how it had come about. But it is annoying, of course chiefly for your sake. I never thought she could take it so to heart. I was so pleased that your friends should come to see you. Especially these girls. All the same, and perhaps it was that feeling which influenced me, have you been careful enough in the choice of one of them, Milla ? ”

“ What do you mean ? ”

“ Nothing particular, don't be so vehement, my dear ! You do not quite understand me. A girl who is so uncertain of herself and—well—whom one can so easily confuse—there might come a time when you would repent that you had been intimate with her.”

Milla got up, literally as white as a sheet. She felt exactly as though he had spoken of her; there are very few girls of her age who would not have felt so. But she did not say a word. She cried bitterly as she went into her bedroom, shutting the door behind her.

The next day, the moment the time for recreation was sounded, Milla took Tora by the arm, and during every recreation it was the same thing. They were both beaming with good-humour; Nora and Tinka greatly admired Milla for this. They had not thought that she had so much heart and spirit.

This little occurrence, more than anything else, laid the foundation of their friendship.

The Staff was formed.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE STAFF.

IT was soon noticed that the whole of the senior class and that next to it had come under a single influence.

Rendalen was so much struck by the alteration, without understanding the ground for it, that at last he made inquiries, and it was explained to him. He was much amused, gave the four girls their celebrated name, and at the same time suggested that they should form a "Society." It was true that they already had social evenings at his mother's, and they would continue these, but it would be better if they took the whole affair into their own hands; select the subjects for readings and lectures, or for discussion, among themselves. The last especially. Girls had so many "fancies" in their heads that they ought to learn in early life to be able to carry out a thought, to pursue a special interest. A Society! The senior class is to institute a Society. They may invite their friends from the town or the elder girls from the second class. They will be allowed to speak at the meetings on what subjects they choose, invite whom they like to take part in the readings and music, they and no one else. They were to be empowered to make rules, elect a president, and secretary, impose fines! What fancies this



awakened, not in the senior class alone, but in all of them, down to the little ones who learned to spell, and sing songs about the cat. What a stir at meal-times, what a whispering during lessons, what commotions at play-time! When a school is excited by a question which must not be openly discussed in lesson hours, it causes despair among the teachers. No one studies, no one listens, no one keeps order or remembers anything. If one wishes really to be amused by the suppressed excitement of the class, one must not stand in front of them; there they restrain themselves.

No, take up your position behind them and observe their plaits; you might imagine that they had gained an independent life—they jump, they dance, they curl and uncurl themselves. The changes of colour during this extreme restlessness is comical. All the fiery red, sandy and brown-red, up to black, look as though they were wet or shining with oil, or take a dead colour like coffee grounds. There are locks which are black above and brown underneath, and those of absolute raven black; there are light ones in every shade of ashen, of yellow, or an ugly mixture of both, with green for a foundation. All these assume the wonderful changes of colour which belong to their years. The braids are as excited as though they were chattering to each other, playing tricks on one another, springing towards each other. The life behind is a perfect reflex of that in front.

At the first—that is to say, the preliminary—meeting of the Society, Nora was elected president; Tinka was so accustomed to have all the work put upon her that she knew beforehand that she would be chosen secretary; she was right, she was chosen unanimously.

It had this advantage, Nora considered, that she would thus be able to copy the minutes of the proceedings for Frederik. It was true that their earliest determination was that the proceedings should not be made public, but then Tinka was engaged.

Otherwise they began without written rules, but Frederik wrote from Christiania requiring the most clearly defined ones. He sent a draft. There were fines for non-attendance, fines for disregarding the rules therein set down, fines for every other kind of disorder, fines for omitting to vote. But the girls took it more practically than he—the donkey—as Tinka called him on this occasion. Nora and she worked

out, quite quietly, a new set of rules ; they were discussed at the next meeting amid some disorder ; rules did not appear to be to their taste.

A great deal of fun was made in the town over the "Society ;" there were some, however, who considered it unbecoming, some thought it dangerous, but when a theatrical company visited the town and its most select representation fell on the same day as a meeting of the Society, and the members, with a few exceptions, were with difficulty persuaded to sacrifice this meeting, it was allowed that a proof had been given of their zeal. No one thought it worth while to raise the question again as regarded the chief representation, they were left in peace.

Very soon a serious error showed itself in the rules of the Society. Any one might anonymously propose a subject for discussion to the president, and it was decided by vote whether it should be placed on the agenda.

Thus it was anonymously proposed to discuss "Immortality," but this did not obtain a single vote. The proposer was evidently not a member. Another proposal ran, "Ought men to be allowed to wear moustache?" and this was written in the same hand. It was now suggested that no notice should be taken of any communication which was not laid on the secretary's table during the course of the meeting. It was objected that the proposal in this case would no longer remain anonymous, but they were sufficiently confident in their own adroitness, for it was adopted.

Although the discussions were absolutely private, it was maintained in the town that one young lady in the course of her lecture had declared that it was most pitiful of men that they could not keep their vows of chastity so well as women. It was then that Dösen composed his famous "*Nora, Tora, ora pro nobis.*"

With this exception it was not certain what the girls discussed, they had agreed to pretend that everything that was said about them was true, a roguish Freemasonry kept this joke going.

One of those who teased them the most was Consul Engel. He had soon made his peace with the Staff, having sent his apologies through his daughter. Besides this, he had presented Tora with a nest of Japanese boxes, in the smallest of which was a charming pin. In order to make

everything smooth again, he gave a "Reconciliation Dinner," to which Milla invited several of her friends. An enormous doll had been sent by *grande vitèsse*, which he set up on the table and ceremoniously introduced to the four girls. It was magnificent; Tinka had put on her stoutest dress, Tora, who was in a wild mood, sat next to Milla. She chattered without stopping for a moment, so that Milla had to pinch her under the table to make her be silent, at which Tora laughed as though she were mad. Nora ran to the piano in the middle of dessert, to sing a song which the Consul had never heard. He declared afterwards that he had never amused himself more innocently. His only notion of talking to them was to tease them, his favourite theme was the Society. They laughed at his jokes and kept them up, but they would not give in; for women are used to having the things they are fond of held up to contempt. The Society was a new thing in their lives, soon it became something more. But to show this we must return to one who is waiting for us. Anna Rogne did not come to school that Monday; Milla came up to muster with her heart full of self-reproach. Directly after school she drove round to see her, but Anna was ill; her aunts came out smiling and told her that she could not be disturbed. The next day Milla came again. She asked if she might not at least be allowed to see the invalid. Anna and she had begun to read *Fabiola* together, might she not read aloud to her? "Little Anna hoped she would excuse her," they said smiling, and Milla went away. Anna was away three weeks, and Milla called two or three times more, but did not see her. After that she gave up the attempt.

Anna was not ill, she told her aunts openly what was the matter; she had been deceived and slighted—nay, more than that, she had been robbed. What she meant by this last she would not explain for a long time; she could not. She must be quite alone. They could hear her the whole day walking about in the attic, and sometimes in the night as well; they were terribly frightened, but did as she wished. They always told her when they were going to have prayers, but she would never join them; when she noticed their increasing astonishment and anxiety, she at last told them that *that* had been her greatest loss; for all that she valued most she had shared with Milla. Not to speak of their mutual

profession, there was not a prayer, not a hymn, not a favourite passage of Scripture which had not been exchanged between her and her friend, as lovers exchange their betrothal rings, make presents to each other, and kiss each other's portraits.

She could no longer bear to see, to be present, to hear or think any more about the subject.

She did not cry, at all events not when any one saw her ; little Anna had a strong will. She looked on what had happened as one foe looks at another. Her feelings did not take the form of *pain*, but of *anger*. She hated the others, she pitied herself. The misapprehension she had laboured under, up to the last hour of that last day when she stood before Milla's door and heard the others laughing inside—could anything more absurd be imagined ! What had she not, in utmost seriousness, shared with a girl like that, and the inward strength with which she had credited her ; there were no bounds to her sense of shame when she thought of it, and yet she was obliged to think of it. She forced herself to confess it to her aunts, she forced herself to probe down into the most remote causes ; it became an employment which brought others in its train. She roused herself, began to stir about, to take long lonely walks, and at last to read. At the end of three weeks she returned to school, rather paler than usual and a little thinner, but in all other respects, apparently, just as before. She did not take her old place, but was still friendly with every one, even with Milla. Milla made no further attempts at explanation, though it was not perhaps without her knowledge that Tora did so. Anna listened to her, and asked for a little yellow cotton ; she would return it the next day. She attended all the meetings of the Society most regularly ; it was evident that it interested her, but she took no active part.

Just before Christmas Rendalen was invited, on a suggestion of Nora, to tell them something about Henrik Ibsen's "Ghosts." He refused this, but asked leave to speak to them a little on hereditary responsibility ; he considered that in this, when it had been thoroughly worked out and realised, were contained several new moral laws—indeed, that a revolution would be caused by it in many things.

There was great eagerness over this ; they looked forward to a quiet and interesting account, but were given a wild, though stirring lecture. The girls were not less frightened

by Rendalen's personal agitation than by his words. At the end he shouted out that those who passed on an hereditary disease to their children—those, for example, who had frequent insanity in their families, and nevertheless, married; those who, though weakened by debauchery, brought children into the world; those who, for the sake of money, married cripples or unhealthy people and endowed their children with these afflictions—were worse than the greatest scoundrels, worse than thieves, forgers, robbers, murderers; that he would maintain.

Something must have happened: for several days Fru Rendalen had gone about with red eyes, and he himself had been away, probably to Christiania. Anna came forward and thanked him for his lecture in her own *prétentieuse* manner; after he had gone, she said it was the best she had heard. Only one person agreed with her, and that was Miss Hall; the others said nothing, there was a painful silence. At last some one said that the lecture appeared to her to be terribly violent. Little Anna replied that people must be roused, everything was made into an *amusement*. There was too much of that in the Society itself. This caused still greater discord; Nora was annoyed, and asked if Anna would not in that case do something to help it. Anna coloured, but to every one's astonishment she replied: "Yes, she would try."

She disappeared from school for several days; but she announced that she would give a lecture at the next meeting. She wished that Rendalen, Fru Rendalen, and Karl Vangen should hear it; this was certainly not hiding her light under a bushel, her companions thought. Of course the invited guests came.

When little Anna arrived she looked overstrung, her hands trembled as her thin fingers turned the pages of her manuscript and arranged the lights on the tribune. Her voice and delivery were measured, sometimes almost sharp; she did not often raise her large eyes, but when she did so it was with a significance which was most irritating. She read her lecture—the opening was especially pointed:

"Woman does not labour to improve herself in the same degree that she expects man to do. She does not lay aside the failings which she acquired when in another and worse position. I will this evening mention one fault—lying. In her

position as the weaker, woman has accustomed herself to lying, but she is no longer so defenceless as to need this. Thus I consider that in making herself appear so gentle, so pious, so modest, so lovable before strangers, even if only one is present, she lies. It is the same thing when, a straight course being disagreeable to her; she at once takes a crooked one; she gives a false reason, she makes excuses. If there is anything to be done which has grown distasteful she pleads a headache; if any one calls whom she does not wish to see, she is "out," though she is sitting in the parlour. It does not disturb her in the least to make her servant, her daughter, or her friend lie for her when she cannot do so herself.

"Some ladies, possibly a large proportion, have so accustomed themselves to giving untrue reasons, or to concealing the real ones, to making up excuses, that they do it without any necessity, they delight in it as in a kind of coquetry.

"Would this were only in their relations with mankind, but it is the same towards God. I will quote a writer on the subject; he says, 'It is difficult to judge woman's religious faith so long as religion remains her single intellectual interest; but when one sees a hundred, two hundred, three hundred ladies round one fashionable preacher, one suspects mischief. The easiest thing to think of is to allow oneself to be guided by another's words; it is only a step further to be enthusiastic about the preacher himself, easiest of all to feign an enthusiasm which others feel.

"The faith which has lost its ideals on earth, and therefore transfers them to heaven, is certainly not so secure of a good reception there, as the clergy promise. As a rule, there does not remain much more than a vague need.

"There are besides many women who are very cautious; it is best to make things safe for them and theirs. I often wonder what our Lord says when they begin."

She quoted further, and many of the quotations aroused laughter. Karl Vangen was especially amused. From this she passed on to woman's share in societies for charitable objects; how the needs of the poor furnished an excuse for gay dances ("the proceeds for the poor," as they say); how amusing balls and even theatrical performances are organised in aid of the sufferers from shipwreck or fire.

She described how a Society such as this trifled with

great questions and raved about particular lecturers. Anna was severe, as young people generally are, when they take upon themselves to criticise.

When she left the tribune she did not grasp what was said to her; she answered at cross purposes, or asked them what they had said, but little by little she recovered herself; when she looked for Rendalen he was gone.

She was utterly astonished; she slipped across to Fru Rendalen to hear the reason. Of course, she had to begin by asking her what *she* had thought of it.

"Yes, my child, there is a great deal of right in what you say, but I fear that you will all inflate it into something to be taken seriously. Poor things, you will learn then to lie to some purpose. Few women can take this seriously, my child, but they can affect to do so and overstrain themselves as well—ah yes, they often become horribly unnatural——"

At last, slowly and cautiously, came Anna's question, "Why did Herr Rendalen go?"

"Heaven knows!" She sighed, looked towards the door where he had disappeared, got up, and left the room.

Karl Vangen was talking to Tora; he now saw that Anna was disengaged, and came up to her to say that he had been "very much delighted" with some of the quotations; he knew the book. Karl Vangen had been on the high road to become a fashionable preacher; happily he had escaped, but the terror still remained with him. Anna knew this from her aunts, so she had the secret key to his remarks. He believed entirely in woman's religious convictions, he said, and did not quite agree with her.

She asked him his opinion in other respects. "I know so little about women in other ways," he said, colouring slightly, "I dare not enter into it."

As soon as ever the elders were gone, the enthusiasm of the girls broke out. "Little Anna" was the eldest of them, a thing people very easily forgot—she was so undeveloped in appearance. They had never thought her capable of such an effort. "What a remarkable point of view! how well expressed! and that by one of ourselves."

Nora and Tora were especially charmed. "That is just what we are, just as untruthful, principally in little things of course. And how we play with serious questions. We must have deeds as well, or if not deeds, then——"

"Snuff," said somebody, and the whole party burst into roars of laughter, but they began again: "It is true, Heaven knows it is true. It must be altered, it is shameful to be as we are."

As a beginning they would all escort Anna home. Yes, they would! And so they did, and the two crooked old aunts were startled out of their sleep when, between eleven and twelve at night, they heard the swarm buzzing before the house, and the call of "Good-night, good-night, good-night," from twenty ringing girls' voices. And little Anna herself! She had to go in and tell them what it was all about, but she merely said they had come home with her. She could not say more just then. She felt so uncertain. She had written this lecture with her heart's blood; she had turned her bitterest feelings into an assault; she had felt certain that she would be assailed for it; hated for it, and lo and behold, she had been thanked for it over and over again; nothing had been heard but exultation and praise.

She lay in bed, but could not sleep. Was it from pleasure? Was it from fear? Or had she been for the first time moved by them? It was not disagreeable.

At the same time more than one little head lay pondering what course should be pursued. The impulse to take this seriously, to be terribly truthful, must have nourishment, otherwise it would certainly die. And they found something real to do!

Milla was in mourning; Milla could not go to balls this Christmas. They would none of them go to balls this Christmas either. Yes, laugh if you like, but it was unanimously determined upon. One does not desert a friend in sorrow: not one of the Staff would go to a dance the whole winter through. Milla felt flattered by so much sympathy but—"No buts!" Immovable, unanimous determination.

And that should not be all, they would think of something more.

The young fellows of the town mourned over the loss of so many merry young partners that Christmas, but all unavailingly. Indeed, it pleased the girls that their absence was regretted.

As has been said, it was not to end here.



## CHAPTER IV.

## ON THE STEPS.

THIS union of the leaders among the girls, this real desire for knowledge and independent thought, even if it had to endure criticism and even a little derision, was still an incontrovertible proof that the school was now on the high road to success. Even if there were derision expressed in the town, there could be no doubt that every one was struck by the decided, and above all intelligent, comprehension which the superiority of the apparatus, experiments, and method aroused in the scholars on subjects which every one understood, and which belonged to the most special needs of life.

At home the girls overflowed with narrations and desire for information, and constantly asked permission to buy materials for experiments in chemistry and physics, microscopes, and historical pictures which illustrated beliefs and habits of life through all ages.

There was no longer any comparison between girls and boys when energy and information were in question.

This made the lesson hours happy; the great gatherings for "breakfast" at twelve o'clock were feasts, and the pupils ran down the slope in the afternoon without books, unburdened by lessons—free, free, free!

But the happiest of them all remained behind, Fru Rendalen and Karl Vangen.

How Fru Rendalen hurried about with her spectacles awry, a habit she had acquired in later years; it was like meeting a load of hay at hay-harvest, it smells so sweet from such a distance, and one so gladly stands aside to let the mighty, useful, close-packed object pass. Karl Vangen was one constant smile; he had no time to leave off. He beamed with delight if any one so much as looked towards the school, and would tell, over and over again, all the little incidents which occurred there: they were every one either remarkable or amusing.

It was only Tomas who was not quite in accord with them, but there never was much "comfort" about him, if by that one understands confidential intercourse, and even

good temper. He either wanted tall Karl Vangen to "give him a back" out in the garden walks, or even sometimes in the sitting-room, while he jumped over him as one boy jumps over another; or he walked up and down, up and down, generally whistling, with his hands in his pockets, till it made one giddy to look at him; or else he would play the piano by the hour together. Sometimes he worked for, and in, the school without intermission; or read a new book regardless of any interruption; or he took endless walks or read aloud, and amused himself with the girls as though they were all comrades; or else he could not bear them, or the school, or anything which belonged to it.

At such times his mother had to take the literature lesson for him, Miss Hall the chemistry and physics, Nora the singing; he would not, he could not.

Then he would come back again, brighter and happier than ever, and do the work of two. His mother put this down as the result of all the years he had lived without regular employment. If they had company he did not appear at all, or else came and carried everything before him, or came and sat silent. If he spoke to any one, it was "Yes, just so," "Quite right." And then he would leave the room and not return. Looked at in a certain way, this showed genius: there was something of a genius about Tomas Rendalen.

Before he went to America he had "discovered" a history teacher: he was very great at "discoveries." She was called Karen Lote, and taught needlework, writing, and drawing. Rendalen had noticed her acquirements in the different kinds of drawing, and found out that the girl possessed a by no means insignificant knowledge of history. "Extend that into the history of civilisation," he said. He was never tired of giving this advice. "Here at home the history of civilisation is worse than meagre and it is the only one which is worth anything in a school."

He had then begun to make the large collection of historical pictures which the school now possessed, and through these he captivated her interest; he kept it, while he was abroad, by sending a number of these pictures to her, as well as books and advice; and he was hardly home again before he undertook the history lessons of the whole school to explain to her what his ideas were; he sought to show

development and connection by a clear historical summary accompanied by maps and pictures ; he made it slight for the younger, and more elaborate for the elder ones ; only using details as characteristics. He made it one-sided, but there was power and colour in its historical representations. Karen Lote was captivated ; the novelty of his appearance, his opinions, his wonderful talent for teaching, his inimitable way of making one believe that there was nothing in the world for him beyond what was before him at the moment ; his exquisite taste in dress, his well-ordered person, even the slight odour of delicate scent which always followed him, all gave the girl a deep interest in him. Nothing in the six-and-twenty years of her life had ever in the slightest degree approached it. To think of being helped in her work by him every day ! The misunderstandings and persecutions which he went through, and his sufferings under them, brought her feelings to the pitch of enthusiasm. But she did not trouble any one with it. Then came the time when he became the principal of the school. He would come and listen to her teaching whenever he had a spare moment, share eagerly in it, or go away without saying a word ; remain away for a long time, then come again every day, and take the whole lesson out of her hands ; or else walk up and down, up and down, and then remain away again.

Just before Christmas Karen Lote went to Fru Rendalen, and told her that she could not stay a day longer in the school. If she merely heard Rendalen's step in the passage she trembled ; when he was near she could not relate the simplest occurrence or give an explanation. "But why ?" He treated her with the most open contempt ; she burst into tears. "Contempt ?" Yes ! either he continually interrupted her, took the whole lesson away from her, or else he did not consider her worth correcting, turned his back on her, did not bow, did not come at all. There was no end to her complaints.

Fru Rendalen assembled the teachers and laid Fröken Lote's complaint before them, convinced that it must be the most extraordinary misunderstanding. But the teacher who had succeeded Fröken Lote as drawing mistress assured her that if she had not had a mother to support, she would have left long ago ; she would not have borne his continual

corrections in the children's hearing ; he was an unbearable tyrant.

Everything must be done in one particular way, without the least variation. He had made her so nervous that she trembled if she even heard him in the passage. And she cried too.

The startled Fru Rendalen turned quickly to the others. "What could this mean? The teachers of languages, her pupils from their childhood, her friends, who through her help had improved themselves abroad, they must speak." They felt sure that Rendalen had not the least idea that he "set people right," and as little that he offended people by interfering, so that the children noticed his immense air of superiority, but all the same it was often very annoying. He was so uncertain both with teachers and children, he never took things twice in the same way, it was always according to his temper. The conclusion which they all came to was that he was most unfit to direct a school. Miss Hall herself, who otherwise had no complaint to make, agreed with this.

Fru Rendalen implored them, for God's sake, to reconsider it; surely they did not wish to ruin the school; she was much agitated, and said that provisionally she would resume the direction. But they must not let this be known. She broke down with all the violence which was natural to her. The others were frightened, there was a touching scene; they praised her son, one against the other; nay, any one who had not heard what had gone before, would have believed that they were all glowing with enthusiasm for him. After all, to form a wonderful plan for a school, according to all the best examples of modern times, and himself to be an exceptional teacher, was something quite different, and a great deal more than to be an able principal. They and his mother soon agreed over this, and consoled themselves with it as well as they could.

But this school had been the object of Rendalen's life; if he were to lose this, there would be nothing left for him. From the time that Augusta died, and he learned that it would be better that he should not found a family, the idea of taking his mother's school, and making it all that she had dreamed of, but had not accomplished, had been betrothal, marriage, and the foundation of a family to him. He was

proud of it. This gave the intense energy to his early youth, to his work, to his sense of right. It was the object of Karl Vangen's unfailing admiration, the secret text for Fru Rendalen's conversations and letters.

Notwithstanding this, temptations came, and his unruly nature did not always emerge victorious from them, but each time he was seized with a feeling of shame for his ideal, which amounted to dread—that awful dread which his mother had felt while she bore him under her bosom. She had often described this in vivid colours, but it was nothing compared to what he had gone through ; it had been terrible. This drove him back to his mother's confidence, and made him hold that confidence fast. There was sober earnest between these two, they had a common aim in life. It might have been that he would have cast her, his aim of life, and this dread to the winds, if his passions had concentrated themselves on, or been seized by, any one person, for there was a wild energy in him which would have made him cling closely to another ; but the hereditary restlessness in his nature mingled one impression with another, his dread had time to come between them with ever stronger force, and it became at last the most powerful of all. The aim of life was saved. From the time that he had conquered, a dissatisfied feeling developed itself ; it had always been there ; it reminded one of his father's power of imagination, his love of perfection.

His studies were forced. Never one thing at a time, but one clashing with the other. If the examination subjects had not in such a special degree been necessary for him, he would never have passed one at all ; he was ready long before the time with some things, and was as much behind with others. He was always in advance with the subject he was full of at the moment, it was a link in a visible or ideal entirety. To Karl Vangen, who knew his method of study, it was amazing what he accomplished. It was the same thing with his intercourse with his fellow-creatures ; he often seemed to be inattentive, and yet he received original impressions, but they were all on the same lines. He saw images and demonstrations in anything he was engaged in ; not people, but phenomena ; not facts, but ideas. As long as Karen Lote was learning his historical method she interested him deeply, but afterwards not in the least ; it was much

the same with the other teachers, excepting Miss Hall; her teaching was new, and he was eager to see the result of it—first intellectually, then morally.

But *his own work*? When the long restless rush about the world after appliances and methods was over, after the plans for the school, conceived years ago, and since then endlessly arranged and drafted, were at last set going; especially after the rude resistance from without was overcome, what was it that gradually came over him? Could he not? Would he not? Was it no longer enough for him?

Every one round him rejoiced in the school, his mother's delight in especial was touching. "This is the school that I have dreamed of, my son, my dear Tomas!" He heard it nearly every day, he thanked her and kissed her for it, he needed it; but all the same . . . As for teaching, his principal talent, he could interest himself in making a thing absolutely clear, and in having the main points properly remembered, the most difficult ones understood; it could delight him to give a new view of something to the elder pupils, or to direct their attention to a question of the day. Whenever a problem presented itself, he would take it up with patient ingenuity; beyond that there was nothing—no, nothing! He realised his failings thoroughly, self-occupied though he was; they harassed him more and more. There were times when he could not endure the school. Then he felt himself without spirit, without aspiration, without—he could almost have said without affection—if his mother had not been there, and Karl as well; he was deeply attached to Karl.

This was no longing for a wife and family, at all events in no special degree; indeed, he felt no particular attraction to anything.

Was this the cause of his unhappiness—that he could not attach himself firmly to any conditions? He had been able to do so as a child.

A man who has deliberated in this way from one day to another, and at last, one evening, receives his mother's tears and lamentations because the teachers can no longer endure him as principal, does not start up as at something unexpected. Tomas remained at the piano, where he had been seated when she came in; he touched it with one

finger now and then during her long and interrupted narration ; he saw her despair and concealed his own. He felt as though now he had nothing more to do here.

He observed quietly that perhaps she had better resume the direction of the school for a time ; he went on strumming as he said this, as though it had no further significance. She answered that she had already promised them to do so. He grew as white as a sheet. She hastened to add, that of course only he could superintend his own plan : she begged him to speak to the teachers at once ; he never would speak to any one, they entirely misunderstood him ; he offended them by showing no confidence in them, and he was not always considerate. Did he not like them ?

This was too much for Tomas ; he flung himself down on the piano and cried, got up hastily, put on his hat and coat and went out, heedless of his mother's prayers to him to stay and talk it over with her, as they used to do in old days. He could not do it ; for there was something in his mother's behaviour towards him which wounded him. When he had come home she had received him with the greatest admiration, everything he said and did was right ; but after the lecture she began to doubt. This had gradually increased, until now she put a note of interrogation to everything he said. At the first complaint from the teachers she had taken the school from him ; and she could reconcile this with her pride in his way of ordering it, and a crooning quiet delight over its success.

Not that her doubt was greater than a practical understanding like hers had perhaps a right to ; he did not blame her for it, but he could not bear it.

This affair with the teachers was dreadful. He really considered them most excellent, none more so than Karen Lote, otherwise he would never have troubled himself about her.

There must be something at the very root of his behaviour towards people, which was terribly astray when he could be thus utterly misunderstood. Perhaps his own feeling of emptiness and distaste arose from the same cause.

These ladies had raved about him. They and the senior class, and . . . Was that, too, nothing but a delusion, or was it past and gone ?

"Raved about him." What is that ? He drove it from

him with contempt, yet once it pleased and deluded him. He had believed it would always continue.

No, he who would have the affection of others must show affection to them. And he could not do it—in the way that others could.

After all that was not strange. His race had perhaps exhausted its power of winning human affection.

Was not that the natural result when generation after generation broke down mankind's precepts of fidelity, and flung aside man's good opinion? The race itself had been ruined, as each one weakened himself and his offspring—ay, and others and their offspring as well.

He walked into the country to the left—the same walk that he had taken that spring evening after he had given his lecture. He recalled to his mind how happy had been his return from America, how he had dreamed of giving his countrymen an example which, if they would follow it, would shine throughout the world. What was nobler for a small country than to centre its greatest powers on the teaching of its children, to expend its surplus there; let the great nations waste theirs on armies!

He remembered how it then delighted him to think that in this way the sins of his forefathers might be expiated.

Everything on earth had been thus developed.

Awakening had come to the strongest races. Instinctively they had felt their failings, and had sought to combat them by an admixture of fresh blood. Everything, therefore, that is strong and good has some family for its progenitor, whose sufferings have been the foundation of its needs, its needs the foundation of its work; its work, its self-command, the foundation of its discoveries—all gathering round the original discovery. When the school should be alive with a hundred young creatures; when sparkling eyes gazed upon the aim which he had set up; when the elder ones among them, influenced by him, and in their turn influenced others—hoisted their colours—it would be remembered that they had lived in the house of one particular family, from that family they would have received their instruction. It was *he* who had made the school.

But there lay an inherent weakness in its inmost recesses. The germs of destruction lay in him who had built it up. He could not advance it further. He did not possess the



necessary long-suffering gentleness. Plenty of foresight, energy, ambition, but—talents for war, perhaps, but not for peace.

As he had walked along that evening after the lecture, sick at heart, anxious—ah! how anxious! because the certainty of years had been baffled, Karl Vangen had trudged silently by his side like a great long-legged dog with honest eyes. He went the same way now, only it was winter, and he was alone; he was ashamed to have any one with him. The suspicion of insecurity which had shaken him the first time was now a certainty. He could not go on—O God! he could not: he was a blight in the school.

The snow in the fields had melted, but farther away it lay in patches, looking ghostly in the moonlight. It still lay thick under the fir-woods; and here and there on the road, which had frozen hard with deep ruts in it, and small sharp stones and solid horse-dung. Where it was bare, or partly bare, it was difficult to walk. He came back so weary in body and mind that he never remembered to have felt more tired. By the new churchyard, where his father and grandfather lay, and where the sea washed up to the other side of the road-way, rolling and black, he felt that a little might bring him into the one or beyond the other—or perhaps to both—they were not incompatible.

It was past twelve, as on the night of the lecture; he would not go home before he felt certain that his mother had given up waiting for him. Under ordinary circumstances she went to bed between nine and ten. But as he struggled up the avenue, he saw that there was a light in the sitting-room; and as he got a little further, that there was one in Karl's room as well. If he had not been so utterly weary he would have turned back, but now things must go as they could.

His mother met him in the hall with a light in her hand. "Oh, Tomas, how you have frightened me!" she whispered.

What did she mean by that? He looked at her; poor thing, she appeared at least ten years older, with such red eyes—so upset, so miserably overdone.

She began, "Tomas, just let us——"

"No, mother," he waved her away with his hand; "I am so fearfully, oh, so fearfully tired." He went slowly across

her room to the inner passage without a good-night, without looking round.

She heard his step in the passage, heard him open the door of his room, shut it, and turn the key on the inside! It always awakened memories, that dreadful sound!

Why did he do it? It seemed as though he were shutting her away from him.

As he was lighting his candle he heard Karl at the door between their rooms. Tomas set down the candle, came out from behind the curtain, and saw Karl's pale, anxious face looking in from the doorway.

Why had he and his mother sat up, each in their own room? Evidently so that the mother should be able to talk to her son alone when he came in.

Tomas flung himself on Karl's neck and sobbed violently. All that he had held back, when he saw his mother, now found vent. Karl's firm confidence in him was his chief support. That confidence was there now, he could see it through all his distress precisely as he saw the light streaming behind Karl's head and body in the doorway. It was dark between them. "No, dear Karl, not to-night, I am so tired." Slowly, noiselessly, Karl drew his long legs back again and shut the door behind him. The door-handle was turned, oh, so gently.

Tomas went straight to bed, and slept at once and without interruption through the night. When he woke, raised himself and looked at the clock, it was past eight. The sorrows of yesterday, which had at once rushed upon him, yielded before this proof of a long sound sleep. "There cannot possibly be so much the matter as I believed, if I am not worse than this." He jumped up. "There must be some other work in life reserved for me, if this is not to be the one." He dressed himself quickly, and while doing so determined to go away for several days. He wished to consider, and to be calm while he did so.

This was all the information which his mother received when she came in as he sat at breakfast. He sent a message to Karl, and left at ten o'clock. This was not altogether disagreeable to Fru Rendalen. "He has such sudden changes," she thought. "He will very likely return home a different man." His great failing, of talking and acting according to the temper of the moment, made her take

this view, made her question all he said. He was conscious of this now. He hated it.

This time, however, she was mistaken; he returned exactly the same as he had gone away, only she noticed the first time that she talked to him that he was a little bitter against the teachers: "ungrateful asses," he called them. He had taught them more than it was in the power of any human being to do who had not travelled as he had done, and had his experience and reading; he would have nothing to do with them. He annoyed them by his elegant courtliness. This amused him; he was really dreadful with them. He resumed his teaching, with the exception of the singing, which was given over to Nora, who was now both pupil and teacher. He declared that she possessed the gift of teaching in the highest degree.

"Perhaps he could interest himself in the school again," thought Karl, "if there were a new staff of teachers." He spoke of this to Fru Rendalen. She would try to find out, and began by talking to Tomas about the observatory which they had arranged in a small way in the tower. They had been obliged to stop for want of money. By next summer she hoped to have the means to set it going.

"God knows where I shall be then," he answered, and hurried away. "If I were to speak plainly to the teachers," thought his indefatigable mother, "if I could induce them to beg his pardon." She assembled them one day just before Christmas, and told them; betraying emotion as she did so, that her son had repeatedly let fall remarks which showed that he intended to go away. There was a movement of dismay.

Fröken Lote, on whom all eyes were fixed, at last broke silence. She had not meant it in that way, she had only meant—she had really not meant anything—but she was so dreadfully nervous. She thought he was not pleased with her. The drawing and needle-work mistress, a clear-headed, tall, fair woman, coloured furiously. The Spenser method of drawing which Rendalen had introduced was not clear to begin with, she said, but he was always beyond her; but for all that she ought not to have said anything, indeed she ought not. She began to cry.

The teachers all protested that they felt the greatest gratitude; he had, of course, seen and heard so much on every

subject, but it was most embarrassing that he treated them like dirt beneath his feet.

Fru Rendalen took off her spectacles, wiped them, and put them on again; pulled them off again, rubbed them, and put them on.

Well then, Miss Hall would say what was the matter. It was that he treated everything and everybody so unevenly. This made the teachers uncertain, and destroyed the children's sense of justice, and that was almost the greatest loss that a child could sustain. She would so gladly have spoken to Rendalen, said the little American, but he made himself so unapproachable. To-day, too, she felt nervous.

This destroyed Fru Rendalen's plan; she did not know what to answer. All further negotiations were meanwhile broken off.

A loud chorus of joyous girls' voices sounded from the steps, and they all hurried to the window. It was Nora and her pupils. These last few days before Christmas, the pupils had but few lessons to do, and therefore had employed themselves in practising some part songs, the practice always concluding out on the steps—one of Nora's many fancies.

This gave such immense pleasure, that not only all the little ones, who did not join in the singing, waited up there till the great moment, but people would collect in the avenue. As soon as the girls came racing round the corner in walking dress and mounted the steps, the crowd in the avenue increased and drew nearer; Fru Rendalen and the teachers had put on their things, and were now standing at the open windows. The girls had arranged themselves from top to bottom of the steps; the little ones, who did not sing, occupied the sides. Right at the bottom stood Nora, with her fair hair turned back under the hood which was always on the back of her neck.

She had adopted Rendalen's method of conducting—the only thing that restless being did quietly; he merely moved his right wrist, and gave the sign with his left hand. Nora carefully held her right hand in the same place as he did, before her breast. She heard about it often enough.

The song sounded grandly from the steps, the notes were powerfully given. It might be, too, that the view before them heightened the effect by its beauty; perhaps, too, "An Old

Manuscript,"\* which had just been printed in a Christmas number, and which every third person in the town, from twelve years old knew, at first, second, or third hand, may also have enhanced it, for perhaps those dark voices from the past were heard at the same time, and by the power of contrast made the girls' song brighter and the moment fairer.

Below them lay the town, with the harbour between the two points of land; now that winter was here, full of ships from side to side. At the head of the bay, along the clay banks, were all the workshops and the great timber-yards. To the left, the mountain, with the crowd of houses at the top, the boat harbour below, and out beyond the mountain and the town, the islands and the open sea. Weather on the coast is uncertain; generally, as they looked out, taking in the view as they sang, there were either driving clouds or gleams of sunlight over the landscape, or if it were peaceful and bright inland, it was threatening out to sea. Perhaps this may explain why the girls generally chose melancholy songs.

For the teachers as well as for the pupils, the singing on the steps, from its first beginning, had been the glory of the school. If the work from every class during every week in the year could have woven itself into a thousand delicate threads, and fallen on them as crowns; if all the fruitful incentives, small determinations, uncertain beginnings, could have joined in harmony in those voices, the singing could not have made them happier. As far as the teachers were concerned, perhaps for the very reason that, at the same time, something had occurred to pain them.

The elder girls, especially the members of the Society, looked upon this time as one for exchange of thought. All those higher ideas which one has in common with others, come to the front when there is singing; all strivings after the ideal, have a natural relationship to harmonised notes.

But he who felt it the most was one who had hidden himself behind a closed window, because he would on no account be seen.

He saw Nora beating time, standing there in her light cloak, her hood flung back on her neck.

The song, which sounded out over the town, the one

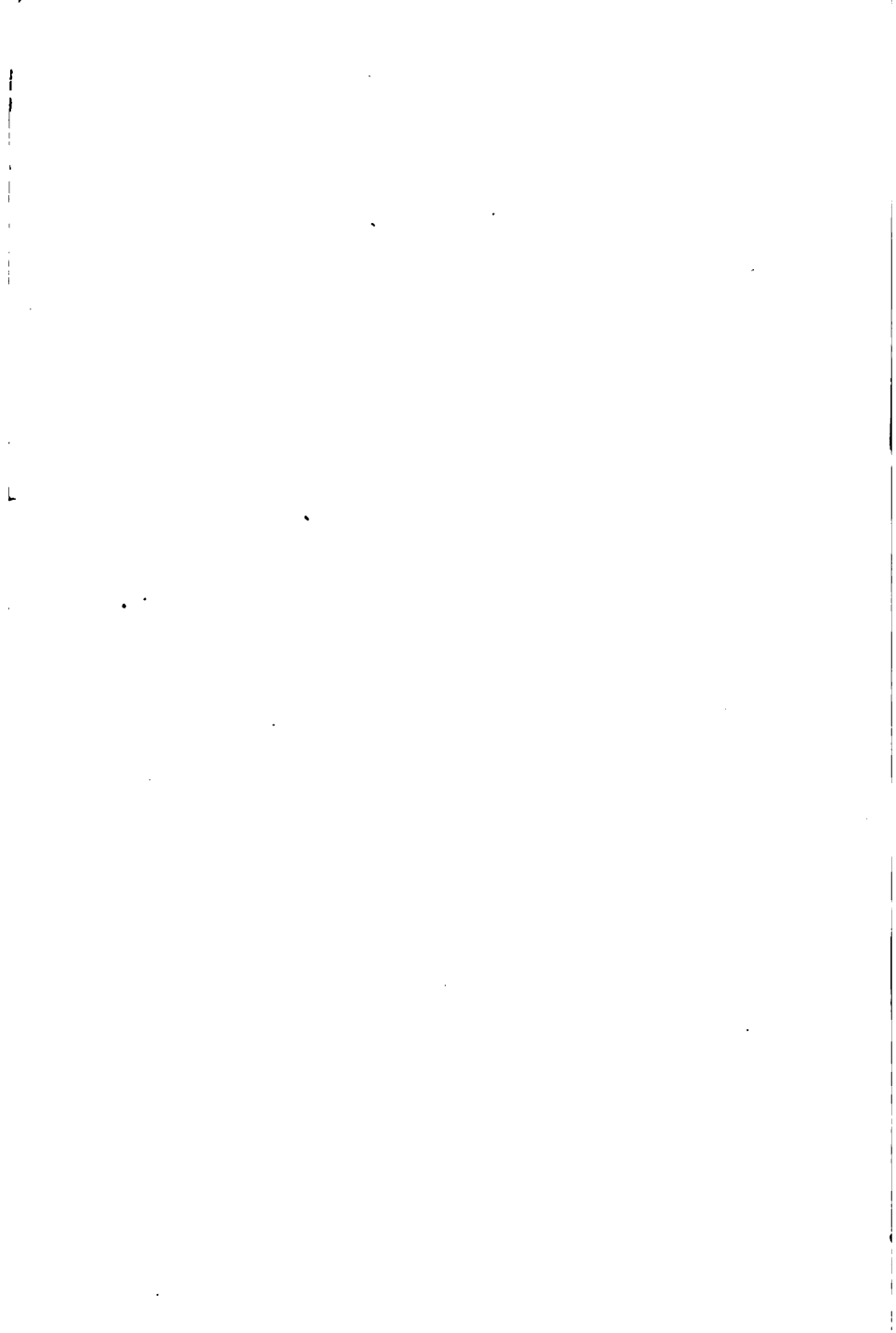
\* Some parts of it have been used in the Introduction.

which had first been heard by Fru Engel's grave, contained, as it sounded from these girlish voices, all that he wished for on earth.

How miserable it made him now ! He tried, as a counterpoise, to remember all that he had conquered before in many a hard struggle. It was something to remember.

It was not an ordinary victory which he had achieved : was it to end in sorrow ? Would the singing soon cease, or sound again after he was gone ? He thought of his mother. It was he in reality who was "on the steps." Was it to be in or out ?

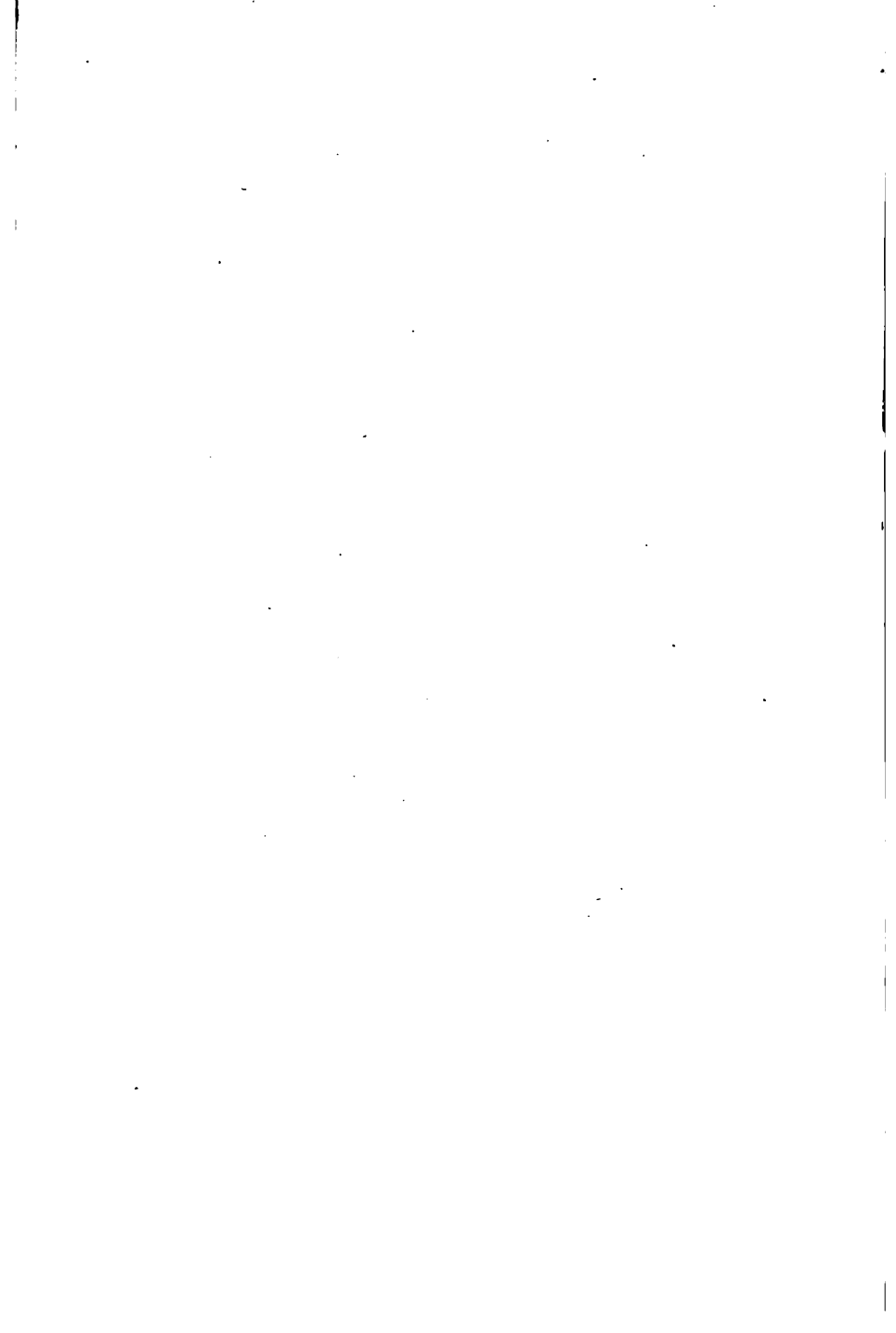
The whole troop tore away in merry groups down the avenue. The Staff last of all, for Tora had something either to tell or propose ; they walked slowly, often pausing. Yes, that was what it all depended upon ; to be able to share one's joys and sorrows with others.



V

THE HUNT





## CHAPTER I.

Child or woman, which is she?  
Hard to answer that will be.  
Wouldst thou then a woman snare?  
See a child is captive there!  
And when thou bidd'st the child to stay,  
A woman from thee flies away.

SPRING had come betimes, and great rejoicing thereat rose, from all the pupils, to the soft skies.

The spring was in their blood, bringing a restless feeling, a power of invention, glorious plans, subdued noise, effervescing spirits in its train; these were days when the whole school routine threatened to be destroyed, and when orders seemed a mere joke. Much commotion, with scoldings, smacks, increased attention, and many arts were required before this small sphere could be guided through the dangerous region of spring without too severe collisions and shocks.

Even the Society itself was shaken. It was not possible, when the trees in the garden were bursting into leaf, to go off to the back premises and pretend that there was something in a friend's composition on ladies' modern dress. If the meeting had been held in the wood, they might have allowed modern dress to roll about in the heather till it was torn to pieces, or they could have hung it up in a tree. They could have let the birds sing songs over it. Now they gave modern dress to the deuce, it could all be learned from a fashion book; they simply held no meetings.

Nora employed all her powers of persuasion, all her inventive genius, in vain. A great event, however, occurred, also perhaps born of the spring and spring impulses, and the Society recovered itself.

Miss Hall had energetically sought to lay some foundation, in the senior class, for the lectures which she delivered to them on her special subject. Both she and the eldest girls in the class had really all been obliged to exert themselves. But a further result was, that during this hard work, they had gained confidence in the little lady; everything belonging to women's constitution and health, and to the tending of children, was spoken of with perfect openness. The mothers kept up as long as possible an appearance of shamefacedness on behalf of their children, who would not be shamefaced themselves. The fathers helped their better halves in this; they were bashful to a degree. But as the shameless maidens continued to acquire knowledge, this answered no purpose.

As concerned the Society, this information, and especially this confidence with Miss Hall, had the result that, by degrees, the woman question began to be looked at in its physical aspect, and its real foundations were sought there.

A book in our literature was again brought forward, which asserts that the freedom which man allows himself before marriage, and sometimes afterwards, destroys his character and woman's position, carrying faithlessness and tyranny from generation to generation.

Karen Lote had, in her studies in the history of civilisation, especially noted the history of the development of races. She knew now that the compromise which was often proposed, of giving woman the same freedom that man took for himself, would be a step in the wrong direction, an unheard-of breach of development. She advocated strongly that inviolable monogamy should be as sacred for men as for women. Miss Hall took up the subject at the next meeting, from its physical side. Can it be physically proved that man has stronger temptation than woman, and therefore has a greater excuse? She declared, on the contrary, that woman's temptation might be very much greater. Notwithstanding which, the rule was that woman respected marriage in a chaste life, while for man's part the rule might still be said to be the contrary.

This aroused violent feeling.

Man had therefore here as well, used the right of the strongest for his own advantage, but in reality with the result of rendering himself and the community depraved.

Woman, on the contrary, has in civilised society, through hundreds of generations, only belonged to one man, therefore she has an inherited power of remaining faithful. It follows, of course, that man could gain this power as well.

During the conversation which followed the lecture, the excitement increased; and in the course of the week so many thoughts had gathered around this subject, that they had to fix an earlier date for the next meeting.

For the first time since the institution of the Society, Tinka Hansen spoke. The woman who married a man who had led an immoral life, joined herself in his guilt; she condoned the ill-treatment of her sex, and was herself punished for it.

Did any woman persuade herself that a man who had accustomed himself to such a life would give it up? At all events, they could not so deceive themselves, who had during the last few years heard a series of lectures which made it plain that habit is a nerve-question; not more than one in a hundred can conquer a habit of his own free will; there must, as a rule, be some hard necessity as well.

Tinka had, as usual, discussed the subject with Frederik; it was therefore not surprising that, as she stood there, she had the authority of two.

Rarely had such noise and commotion been heard since the institution of the Society. From all sides came exclamations which clearly showed what they felt, such as, "Fancy being kissed by a man who——! Fancy being married to a man who——!"

Nora gave voice to these whispered expressions of disgust as she went up to the tribune, and said that they must not separate that evening without promising each other that *they*, at least, would do what they could here to give woman responsibility and self-respect.

She had not finished speaking before they all stood up to express their acquiescence.

Some days later they had another meeting: something had occurred to divide their opinions.

It will be remembered that Tora was fond of telling fantastic fairy tales, and romances scarcely less so; her favourite was "A Strange Story," by Bulwer. Her little Augustus head—which was crammed with ideas of rich stuffs, of sweeping garments, of foreign speech, and home

gossip, and every earthly vanity—delighted in the mysterious.

From a certain day none of her friends were allowed to hear a word more on these subjects; only one, one single one, should henceforth see this obscure side of her varied nature.

Was it because she wished to share this with but one alone, as girls so often do; or was there a little sense of mystery here as well, that he was the only one for whom this was suited?

Whenever, after this, she met Karl Vangen, whether they were alone, or if twenty were present, she always contrived that they should converse in whispers. Her friends were greatly astonished. What on earth had she to whisper about with the parson? He had recently lent her a book about John Wesley, which she devoured, as she did all books, and they had many conversations about his sudden conversions. People who came under the spell of his looks, his words, his presence, yielded to them at once, and were his from that moment. John Wesley came of a long race of clergymen, both on his father's and mother's side; naturally this had in a high degree strengthened his faith and power of preaching. It was like an electric shock, certain natures could not stand against it.

How this was made to lead up to the Kurts, who interested Tora immensely at that time, is her secret; but honest Karl began at once to speak with animation of Tomas's struggle to free himself from the Kurt inheritance. There had been an infusion of new blood into the family before, and a struggle against its sins; but Tomas Rendalen's bringing up, and the struggle he had gone through, were worthy of his energetic character.

Vangen asked her confidentially if she had not noticed Tomas's neatness, his careful toilette? If she had perceived the slight, hardly perceptible, odour of a delicate and very expensive scent? It always followed him. He was always washing and bathing, added the young clergyman, blushing; most people believed that this arose from vanity, and vain he certainly was; but could she not guess what it meant? Tomas Rendalen had gained in the course of his struggle the same need for, the same sacred feeling about, cleanliness with which girls are born. For him all cares for the

body ; dress, scent, were a species of service for the temple ; just as it is to young women, when they have the means and time to perform it.

Some remarks of Tomas had made him understand this ; he was certain that such was the fact. But it was curious that it should take that particular form, was it not ? Perhaps it was because he had been brought up among girls. What did she think about it ? Karl Vangen hazarded this conjecture with great bashfulness. For some reason or other, it was of great importance that she should understand at once that a man might be an excellent member of society, without being exactly a dandy, and using scent.

From that moment Tora Holm had one more person to rave about, added to her rich collection !

Now she persuaded herself that she understood Rendalen's theory of life and work among them. She did not understand, or rather did not think about, the reasons for his restless moods, his want of steadfastness ; her image of this "energetic" nature was not disturbed by them. She loved him. There was no other word for it. There was nothing that she would not do for him if she could, and it was thus that she expressed herself, first to her dearest friends, then to her next dearest, then to those next to them. With unflagging energy the same story, to the same tune, was repeated for the twentieth time to the last of her chain of friends before the next day was past. Such enthusiasm was infectious ; those who had not raved about Tomas Rendalen before, raved about him now. Notwithstanding the red hair, the freckled skin, broad nose, and pale screwed-up eyes, the absence of eyebrows, the restless expression—he was an ideal man ! He damped their ardour a little when he came into the class-rooms and strode past the forms, without looking at a single one of them ; or when he hastily pitched upon something which interfered with the lesson, with such violence as to make them jump ; for he was not to be trifled with ! He nevertheless became their ideal again as soon as he was gone, or, better still, if he were in the humour for teaching, and stayed and took part in it, in his clear energetic style. He had not his equal then.

But just because there was but one Tomas Rendalen, it naturally happened that some of the weaker natures began to reflect : "Good heavens, he is only one, and there are so

many of us." Yes, there was the question. We will not say who they were, or how many there were, who began to feel this doubt. The question is the smallest part of the affair; it is the answer which is the serious matter. The answer! For we may as well confess, soon as late, that some of the girls had gone a little beyond themselves that evening, when they all said "yes" to Tinka Hansen's high-minded views and Nora's proposition. These ones acknowledged afterwards that when one came to think quietly about the one whom one almost loves, or at least would willingly be loved by, and even if one knows that he has already . . . . Yes, the old Kurt town was a terrible place for scandals.

One at last begins to doubt the sincerity of these expressions. Might not the young man in question, no matter what he had done, be depended upon, when he had promised *her* anything? And when she had made him a promise in return, of course he might! He would be a good boy, that he would, if only she got hold of him. One cannot live upon grand theories.

There were some, however, who considered that this was treachery; they were very angry, and a new meeting was called. Those who had dared to change their opinions since the last meeting, were called upon to explain themselves. For a long time no one would do so, but at last a courageous dark-haired girl declared openly that it seemed to her that they had gone too far the last time. "If all men were—as one could wish them to be—well, then. But they are not so by any means. So what is to be done? That is just how we stand."

"And so we will stand," was the answer. This heroic response elicited another in its turn, so that two parties were formed, with a third set of moderates; no one felt certain about these last, as is often the case with a third party. Tinka Hansen (and Frederik) and all who agreed with her and him ("The Frederikers," as they were called), were for absolute equality between the sexes. Infidelity ought from henceforth to be condemned equally severely—no matter whether man or woman were guilty of it. Miss Hall was the only one among the teachers who took part in this debate, and she was a very enthusiastic Frederiker. According as our knowledge becomes more acute, she declared, the punishment of unchasteness should be the same for the

two sexes. Neither ought this sin to be any longer held up as a special accusation against women. Those who made the distinction that woman's offence injured the home, while man's injured another home, another's wife or daughter, must for very shame hold their tongues.

Miss Hall brought this forward at least twice, for there was no answer made to it. The opposite party entirely put that on one side. They repeated over and over again that a man might be excessively worthy even if, things standing as they did at present, he had offended in this particular. Only notorious immorality made a marriage impossible. The Frederikers were scandalised at this "light-minded" talk. That was to open the door to the extension of immorality. They made use of such strong expressions, that the others became angry. There was a perfect hubbub: every one talked, no one would listen.

This was on a Thursday. The following evening, "The Staff" was assembled in Milla's room. They had begun on the same subject, but by degrees had wandered back to Rendalen, who was still of more unfailing interest than the other. Tinka was imitating Rendalen's handwriting on a large sheet of paper. The others watched her efforts with attention, his large handwriting was just the opposite to his careful toilette; it was all run together without any division, each letter and each word absolutely joined on to the others. Tinka's caricatured attempts were like so many embroidery patterns. She wrote: "I can bear it no longer; meet me this evening in the market-place at nine o'clock." She wrote it as a commentary on what they had been talking about—namely, how delightful it would be to receive such a letter. She wrote this closely across a whole sheet of letter-paper. She decorated one sheet after another in this fashion.

Who was it who first proposed what now followed? They never could agree upon this afterwards. *One* thing is certain, that Milla alone raised any objection, but it was so feebly and laughingly made, that it might well be taken for the opposite of what it purported to be. Each one of them took charge of a note on Saturday morning; one was put into Karen Lote's cloak, one into the pocket of the drawing mistress's long faded blue wrap, the third and fourth were



slipped down, one into Miss Hall's mantle, and the other into that of one of the teachers of languages.

The letters were not signed, the envelopes open and bearing no address; the request was written in so extravagant a style that the whole might pass for a joke, but that was just where the temptation lay. For, on the other side, it could not be denied that the hasty writing could very easily be mistaken for Rendalen's style when he was worried and was in a hurry to finish.

At nine o'clock on Saturday evening the last of the worthy townfolk came home from their romantic evening walks on both sides of the town, looking so peaceful and inoffensive that not even a cat could have suspected treachery. Most of them went soberly across the market-place into the town. At this time, too, the boarders who had been out in search of amusement in the town, were returning disappointed up the avenue. It had been calculated that if the Staff could join one of these parties, they would be free from suspicion while they watched their snares. Of course they were all four there; they met several ill-humoured friends from among the boarders a little way down, and joined company with them.

They arranged it so that they should not cross the market-place till just at the time named. And truly, gracious powers! At the top of the market-place, just a little to the right of the avenue, at that moment appeared *Karen Lote*; no one could mistake her erect figure, her grey cloak, and the feather in her hat. The four had so little expected to meet *her*, that if the boarders had not been so sulky and tired, they would have noticed their embarrassment. Could it really be *Karen Lote*!

She turned back to the left; it was patent to all the world that she had come here to wait for some one.

They looked from her to each other; they did not laugh, they did not make a sign—they were frightened.

But there was a revulsion of feeling when they saw the tall drawing mistress come swinging across, and turn into the avenue. She came quickly towards them; she had been given an appointment there at the same time.

Milla crept behind Tora; Tora would gladly have got behind some one; they had to find some excuse to account for their laughter. As the drawing mistress passed them,

hurried and excited, they had just contrived to push Tinka Hansen into a ditch, which fortunately was dry.

And now they were eager to spy on the two other traps. They went up into the boarders' rooms, whence they could see out over the courtyard; they had given Miss Hall a rendezvous behind the gymnasium, but, unless she were standing absolutely still behind it, she had not come. It did not fare much better with their flight across the garden towards the right, where they had given the language teacher rendezvous; they met her, certainly, coming down the path, but it was with several others; running quickly up from the wood, she never so much as looked round. If she had read the letter, she had taken it as a joke. The four girls slipped through the garden-gate and along the same way; they did not want to meet Karen Lote again.

Something, however, had happened a few hours before, which if it had not been stopped would have brought the whole affair to light, in which case not one of the four would ever have set foot in the school again.

On her return from her walk at about six, Miss Hall, very nervous but very determined, had asked to be allowed to speak to Herr Rendalen. She gave him the letter directly he came in. He took it, read it, held it a little way from him, and began to laugh; and when she took it seriously, he laughed still more, quite uncontrollably at last. Ten minutes later he received a note from Miss Hall, in which she informed him that she should leave by the next steamer. On this he rushed off for his mother, whom he found at last in the cowhouse. He explained the whole matter contemptuously to her, declaring that Miss Hall must be mad. Fru Rendalen at once went to her. Miss Hall was greatly exasperated; she cried, and gave confused, hasty explanations, while Fru Rendalen pulled off her spectacles, and rubbed and rubbed them; she could not comprehend it in the least. Perhaps, if we were to talk English, she thought; but it all remained as obscure as ever. Plainly and shortly, what was she angry about? Why did she wish to go? What had happened? What redress did she demand?

She demanded that the culprits should be *punished*.

Nothing more than that! They both set off to the boarders' room, which was now empty; they began to search through the exercise books, portfolios, bookshelves; they

wished to find out who it was who was so abominable as to copy Rendalen's handwriting. From thence they went into the class-rooms. That of the senior class stood just as it had been left; for the cleaning day for this room was Thursday, and the evening sweeping had not yet been done. There they carefully collected all the bits of paper which had been thrown away, straightened them out, and examined them; they peeped into exercise books, lesson books, and desks. They must find out who the unhappy person was who imitated Rendalen's handwriting.

*They all did it!*

As soon as the fact became clear that every senior girl in the school had been occupied with *Rendalen* and *Rendalen*, and again *Rendalen*, Miss Hall gave in; at last they both left the schoolroom—neither of them said a word to the other.

Miss Hall never said anything more about it. But Fru Rendalen talked it over with Karl Vangen. His discourse on Monday had for its subject how wrong it was to do to others, what they would not like others to do to them. This was often the case with young people, "who found great pleasure in discovering the weakness and tender points of others, and playing upon them."

The four dare not look up, but they gave side-glances at the drawing mistress, who chanced that day to be sitting near the laboratory table, facing the others. She rested her long arms on it. Her hand toyed with something standing there, which she looked at intently; but tear after tear rolled down her cheeks, without her making an attempt to dry them. She was quite absent.

All four girls noticed it, and when at the third recreation she was still inconsolable and cried as much as ever, Nora could bear it no longer, but drew her into one of the rooms, and with her arms round her neck whispered, "Pardon, pardon, pardon:" she did not say for what.

They gave each other a confidential hug—regret, sympathy, shamefacedness all mingled together. The poor girl, whom they had befooled out of her most precious secret, was comforted at last by such boundless repentance, such thorough comprehension, such heartfelt devotion.

The same day Tora and Tinka heard what Nora had done; they wanted to do the same, but she forbade them; the poor

girl must not on any account know that there was more than one who knew her secret.

Karen Lote was ill; Rendalen had to take her place, and give some of his work to Miss Hall. All three felt that Karen Lote must not be approached by any one.

How could they have thought of anything so disgusting as what they had done! And that, too, in the midst of serious discussions on woman's position, on woman's honour and responsibility.

Milla would not talk to the others; at school she held aloof, and when any one went to see her at home, her door was fastened. They all felt as though a storm were brewing.

That Milla should hold back from them as though *they* were the guilty ones and not she, Nora would not endure; one day, therefore, they all surrounded her, and asked for an explanation. Milla was offended and tried to get away, but it did no good. She then told them that they had led her into doing what was not right, and she would have nothing more to do with it. The only answer she got was from Nora's great eyes, but she reddened under them. Of course she had taken part in what had been done, she did not deny it; but she did not wish to feel as ashamed of herself again as she had done during the last few days. The others asked if she thought they had been less ashamed than she?

Milla now told them, with a slight air of superiority, that in her first fright at Karl Vangen's discourse, she had asked her father if she might accompany him when he went to the South German Baths. He had consented with great pleasure. She could not draw back now, they were to start in a few days.

At first, all the friends felt Milla's coldness in having proposed to go away without telling them. But Milla now felt this herself, for she altered her demeanour from that moment, and tried to do away with the impression. It was *she* now who was most amiable about everything. When the drawing mistress appeared in a very pretty cloak and hat, without any one being able to find out who "the kind friend" was from whom she had received them, it was at once clear to the three friends that they came from Milla. She denied it certainly, but that was all the nicer of her. So the short resentment changed on both sides to a closer friendship

during the few days that she still had with them. Her father gave a "farewell dinner," the great event at which was the unveiling of a cake, on the top of which four sugar girls held each other with fingerless hands as they danced round a red flag with "Emancipation" on it; round the plinth was written "The Society." But derision was useless. This same Society gave a farewell entertainment to Milla the next day. All good spirits hovered over this, their last meeting, with its many short speeches, its music and songs—over its whole tone.

A girl of a serious turn of mind recalled that all the pleasure that they had had together during their school year had been begun beside Fru Engel's grave; it was closing with Milla's farewell entertainment. Milla was touched, quite overwhelmed; she declared that she was altogether unworthy, she did not deserve the kindness which they showed her; she was not all they thought her.

Tora came up and embraced her, and they all felt that this was genuine. Tora was grateful for the happiest days of her life; she whispered this to Milla, which had a good effect. They ended by seeing Milla home; she took Tora's arm. "Bad times are beginning for me," sobbed Tora.

"But I shall come back again, Tora."

Tinka scolded her for her extravagant way of speaking, it was making the whole thing into a caricature and an absurdity; but this was not the first time that Tora had done so.

When they said good-bye before Milla's door, Tora ran after her up the steps and into the hall; she was never satisfied. When inside she took out a box which Milla knew at once—it contained her one ornament; she had inherited it from her uncle, who had brought it in his youth from California. It was some pieces of rough gold made into a heavy chain, a beautiful piece of work; she pressed it into Milla's hand; she had never worn it herself. But Milla would not think of taking it from her, she did not know how she could justify herself to her father if she were to do so; she refused it decidedly, coldly at last, so that Tora was vexed and ran off. But Milla fetched her in again, held her tightly in her arms, and kissed her. Did she not believe that Milla realised what a great thing it was which she wished to do? But it was a matter of conscience for Milla to say no. They

must not part in this way ; Tora should stay with her, she should stay the night there. And it was so settled. When girls are really fond of each other, they love to sleep together.

The others, who had remained outside, waited a while. As Tora did not rejoin them, they walked on a little way ; they were annoyed with her. They all returned, however, and came quietly through the garden-gate and past the office. A little while afterwards the two friends up in the bedroom heard a subdued chorus of girls' voices under the window, led by Tinka's contralto : they sang " Sleep in peace."

The curtain was half raised ; they saw two figures in white ; two heads—one dark, one fair—looked, nodding and laughing, out.

The whole school was down at the custom-house the next day ; Fru Rendalen, all the teachers, male and female, every one—with the exception of Anna Rogne, who had not been at the meeting the previous day.

There was universal crying, and kissing, and admiration over Milla's travelling dress. The little ones thought they must join in ; they could not cry, but they could kiss. First one little mouth was offered, then two, then five. At last they all insisted on being kissed by Milla, and then sprang back tittering.

The stewardess had all the vases in the cabin, and some dishes as well, filled with flowers. She really toiled over them. Tora, her eyes red with crying, had come with Milla and Consul Engel, and had been the object of all the latter's attentions, but she now kept quite in the background. Milla had to look for her to press her hand for the last time, to give her a last kiss. As the steamer swung round and left the quay, the slender black figure waved her handkerchief to her friends, her veil, which had become loosened, waving with it. In a moment the whole quay was white ; the little ones in front, the elder ones behind them, all waved their handkerchiefs. From the steamer, it looked like the foam from a waterfall dashing down into the sea.

## CHAPTER II.

## IN THE DOVECOTE.

ONE morning in the gymnasium, when the senior class was practising rather reluctantly because the weather was splendid, and two panes were open in the big window that looked towards the mountain, letting the air pour in, laden with the scent of trees and flowers ;—one morning in the gymnasium, just as Miss Hall had joined them, and had, as usual, interrupted the ordinary practice by taking away a few of the pupils for special exercises ;—one morning in the gymnasium, when, as the result of all this, some of the girls had gone over to the window for a moment to give a glance at the hundreds of fruit-trees in full blossom, whose dense masses like an amphitheatre covered the opposite hillside with a single thick crown ;—one morning in the gymnasium, when these same girls could not utilise the moment as fully as they wished, because a number of impertinent young trees had that year shot up in such a marvellous manner, that it was impossible to see the glory of the hillside, except where these young trees allowed it ; nay, worse still, the trees attracted the bees from the hives on the right, and they were more impertinent still, for they buzzed in at the open window, and frightened the girls when they were trying to see out between the trees ;—one morning in the gymnasium, just as all those small labourers in the garden, who in lieu of steel spades, hoes, or forks, use their own small legs, who begin their work at sunrise so as to end betimes, working by no forced contract, but also with no supervision or inspection, through the whole summer and autumn, they and their wives and children feeding at Fru Rendalen's expense, friends with all, except the cat ;—yes, one morning in the gymnasium, just when all these tiny workers—oh, hundreds of them—gathered from all parts, rising high in the air to settle down again and hide themselves in the bushes in every direction, the girls stood looking on in wonderment.

All at once the trees in the wood bowed their heads, and deeply bowed those to the left, in front of the garden, while sand and seeds whirled up in a menacing cloud ; a sudden

squall from inland had come over the hill, and without warning drove across from right to left. Almost before it had reached the garden it was no longer the trees, but the wind which possessed the blossom; every single petal of every opening flower was lifted up, strewn far and wide, and carried away lighter, more lively than the snowflakes, for these are attracted by the earth. Millions and millions of flower wings—a flashing, whirling atmosphere, as of white butterflies, through which patches of green appeared like islands in a sea of cloud, like islets in a mirage.

The girls screamed with delight, shouted, and clapped their hands, all exclaiming as this marvel was driven gleaming across the garden.

From the wood came a darker shower in pursuit of it, following the same course; it soon reached the place where the glittering petals had passed; its track was narrower, but its rush heavier and more rapid.

The girls rushed towards the great door, which was half open; they wanted to follow the bright moving mass, the fugitives from the fruit-trees. They forgot that they were in gymnasium dress—besides, at the back of the house it did not matter; they screamed, they jumped. Just then the door was pushed right open from outside; on the steps stood a young man in white trousers and a naval uniform coat and cap. He laughed and bowed, he bowed and laughed. It was Niels Fürst.

Behind him, down in the courtyard, stood Kaja Gröndal, who wore a light hat and carried a violet parasol. She looked remarkably smart. She laughed too.

"Is not Elisa here?" asked Fürst. No one in either of the senior classes was called Elisa, no one knew any Elisa in the whole school. "No, not Elisa," he said; "Olava!" There was no Olava in either of the classes. "Olava?" No one knew any Olava in the whole school. He was sure that they all took it for a joke. He looked at them in their gymnasium dress, turning from one to another. He had both hands full of flowers, he had to put the ones he held in his right hand against his breast and press them with his left arm when he wanted to raise his cap. Fru Gröndal was carrying flowers as well; they had evidently just bought them, and having heard that the senior classes were at the gymnasium at that moment, he had wished to see



them. "Pardon," he said; "perhaps she was called Petrea, or it may be that she was not here at all. He raised his cap, his light curls seemed to laugh with him, and the girls all laughed till the walls of the gymnasium re-echoed. He sprang down. Fru Gröndal turned and went with him; as they passed round the corner he nodded back at them.

The laughter of the girls sounded round and round the lofty building. They were most of them in a state of excitement, they kept running to each other, asking questions without waiting for an answer; if three of them were standing in a group, others joined them; if some were laughing more than the others, they all rushed in that direction. Two began to dispute, and the dispute increased; one or two more joined in, then several others, all of them at last: the dispute was about the disturber of the dovecote who had been at the door.

Tinka was one of those who was disputing. She was simply shocked at his shamelessness; she looked round for supporters. She thus caught sight of Tora, who was sitting on a bench by the door, as white as a sheet. Miss Hall was attending to her. Tinka sprang across, calling as she did so, "What is the matter?" "What has happened?" Tora had continued her gymnastics by herself, for she had become an enthusiastic gymnast, and pursued a special system. As she was at the height of her practising, she caught sight, through the half-open door, of a pair of little birds which were flitting backwards and forwards about a bush. Was any one under the bush? Had they a nest there? Was it only their usual antics? Then she saw Kaja Gröndal's light dress come between her and the bush, a large bouquet and a parasol instead of the birds; a young man in naval uniform, with his hands full of flowers. She did not know him. Kaja just then caught sight of her, and either Tora imagined it or she really did say, "There she is!" The officer looked at Tora and kept his eyes intently fixed on hers, his eyes both laughed and stabbed. Kaja Gröndal tried to hold him back and then fell behind, but he kept advancing, did not even stop at the steps, but came up them and still on, without removing his eyes a single moment from hers. She could not move. The noise by the window, the squall, which lifted Fru Gröndal's veil and threatened to turn her parasol inside out, the waving of the bushes, the whistling in the trees; she saw, she heard, but as if at a great distance. She could not,

properly understand it, she could not put it together ; a strange weakness came over her, especially in her knees—they would not support her.

Just then the girls screamed out, and the whole group flew by to the door, while he pushed it quite open with his foot. She felt as though she were breathing fresh air, as though some one were supporting her trembling limbs ; but so long as he stood there she could not go away, although she longed to do so ; she *must* stay.

It was not until after he had gone that she tried to find the bench, and only when she sat down did she begin to feel ill. She tried to struggle against the feeling ; Miss Hall came to her, and now Tinka as well ; and when Tinka asked what it was, firmly and decidedly, it helped her—she was able to cry. The others came running up, but they became quiet at the sight of the deadly white face. They did not ask a single question.

"She has been doing her gymnastics too violently," whispered Miss Hall.

"She does everything so energetically," added Nora kindly, sitting down beside Tora, and drawing her head towards her.

The others went away ; Miss Hall asked them to do so. One could hear in the little room, where they changed their dress, the sound of their returning merriment—one heard them go away, group after group. Although the dinner-bell was ringing, Tora sat there, with Tinka on one side and Nora on the other, and Miss Hall in front of them. Tora had spoken to them several times, and assured them that she was well again now. They all three believed that she had worked too hard at her gymnastics—she believed so herself ; but she said, "Oh, what an ugly, horrid man !"

The others looked at each other : "Do you mean Niels Fürst ?"

She did not answer at first : "So that was Niels Fürst ?"

A little time afterwards she shivered as if from cold, but she did not give any further explanation. She understood what had happened so far as that the gymnastics had been the cause of it. That, being weakened, he had had a singular influence upon her. She would not say a word about it.

Miss Hall now went away. The two others sat there still: Tora asked them to do so. It was so nice to hold their hands.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### SEPARATED FROM THE OTHERS.

By the next day Tora had heard that Niels Fürst said she was "out and away the handsomest girl he had seen in Norway." She would not believe it at first, but she heard it on all sides during the next few days. The next time she met Kaja Gröndal she told her the same thing. Tora knew her through Milla, and always spoke to her. She had so far recovered her usual flippancy that she answered that, "If Lieutenant Fürst had not such bad taste, it would have been embarrassing for the rest of the Norwegian girls."

The summer came in with great heat; every one who could, went into the country, to different places on the coast, or up to the houses on the mountains. As soon as ever the school closed they were off; only a few of the poorer ones remained behind, and Tora among them. Nora went to the Baths with her mother; Tinka's relations were well to do, and had a country house. Anna Rogne was in the town; with Rendalen's help she was preparing herself for the post of history teacher in place of Karen Lote, who was leaving the school. But Anna was not easy of access, more especially for Tora, on account of her friendship with Milla. Even when, for all that, Tora did go to see her, she found her so occupied and anxious (she was to take the junior classes after the holidays) that Tora became tired of her. Tora was now again living down at the Point with her mother (her father was never mentioned), where she shared an attic with two of her sisters. She lived in a hurry-scurry and disorder, and had a feeling of self-reproach and disgust for herself, which she shook off whenever she could cross the ferry and run up into the wood above "The Estate," or along the road to the right from the market-place, to the "Groves." This was a pleasure-ground in the wood near the road, a large open space with a number of small "groves"—that is to

say, levelled patches, sometimes with benches and tables ; an elaborate network of paths went in and out among them.

One Saturday afternoon she wished to go there to listen to the band, but on the way to the Frökener Jensens, where she was going to try to get a companion, she met Kaja Gröndal ; she had come into the town to meet her husband, but he had not arrived. "Would not Tora come back with her instead ? The steamer left in an hour's time."

Tora had a great weakness for invitations. Within the hour she was back again with a large hat-box, in which she had put her night-things and a white dress.

The next morning, Sunday, she was standing on the terrace before the Gröndals' little country house. On her right were all the flowers from the house, which had just been brought out to have the benefit of the rain—as yet it was only wet fog ; behind the garden, on the right, it was drifting among the fir-woods ; she could see the nearest trees and a little of the bare hillside lower down towards the sea, a faintly gleaming strip of which, was also to be seen. The fog lay very low, there was not a breath of wind. She could hear the steamer, which had just whistled, away to the left where the pier was ; now she could see her passing quickly—a vague outline, a thicker, darker, moving cloud—through the white fog. She did not concern herself further about her, but looked towards the path which led up from the landing-place between this garden and the next. Just opposite was a low yellow railing, a very handsome one, of cast-iron ; behind it, some old trees in a garden blotted out by the fog ; there, she knew, stood several houses which she could not see from here. One of them was the Wingaards', where there was to be a party to-day.

Who would she meet there ? She stood and thought about it. Fru Wingard had been a Fürst ; would Niels Fürst be there ? She stood thinking. He was in the reserve fleet, which was lying in the Channel.

Why should he not come ? It was Sunday ; why should he not bring several of the officers with him ?

If Tora had known this before she went on board the steamer yesterday, would she have come ? She asked herself the question to-day. Directly she had heard it she had felt a trembling sensation, she felt it at times again to-day ; but the disagreeable feeling was gone, oddly enough,

she thought. Did she really wish to meet him? She did not want to be disturbed by him—no, nor yet to be looked at as she had been before. But to see him, to be seen by him, if it should so chance? Yes, she did wish that—she wished it very much.

When she went along the terrace, to the steps which led up from the left, she could see quite into the sitting-room, and also, in a looking-glass, whether the door of the inner room, where Fru Gröndal slept, was open. No, it was still shut; so she went back to where she had been before.

She could still follow the steamer—that is to say, a dark moving cloud among the fog which hung on every side. The balustrade of the terrace was wet; she dried her hands, forgot, and put them on it again.

She need not have brought the white dress; it was fine rain now. The birds enjoyed the damp, they were singing all round her. Trees, flowers, and grass enjoyed it too.

She noticed their different scents; one of these carried her thoughts far, far away to a country house near Havre, close by the sea; clear blue air, ships, steamers, a long strip of sand, the lazy wash of the waves upon it; close to the sea a country house, low and grey; there they lived. The narrow gate into the garden was open; she stood there on a stone bench, in a short frock and with bare arms; she could see herself in the long striped stockings which she had admired so much the first time she put them on; she peered over the hedge, and the scent of the flowers was wafted to her again and again, just as it was now. It was nearly evening, her uncle would be coming from the town. The path through the gloomy orchard was gravelled—she heard his step.

Here to the left, in the fine rain, she saw an immense umbrella and white trousers below it. It was not raised enough for her to see who was coming; even now, when the garden-gate had to be opened, it was not lifted, it was only held more forward; but she knew now that the step on the gravel was coming, not towards the country house at Havre, but here; it was not her uncle, but——?

The umbrella was raised, its owner stood inside the garden. A dark coat, a straw hat, and a very puzzled face were seen; she felt something of the uneasiness from which

she had thought herself free, but as he looked at her it passed off; just the reverse of what had occurred the last time.

He had evidently not expected to see a dark lady on the terrace, perhaps no one at all, so early in the day. But it was by no means disagreeable to him; he smiled and raised his hat, there was nothing in his eyes to-day which hurt her. He paused at the steps, the umbrella lay on his right shoulder while he laid his left arm on the balustrade and leaned against it. That was a well-formed hand with the signet ring on it. He was slight and active; his head was noticeable for three things: a nervous sensuous mouth, which was constantly moving, the lips twitching backwards and forwards, in and out, as though moved by a string—the lips themselves being short and full; a pair of large eyes, roguish and gentle, though they stabbed when he put his head a little backward and half shut them; excessively curly hair of a golden colour, and long reddish whiskers. As he leaned over the balustrade, there was a repose about him full of careless enjoyment. But this mood was not to be depended upon, nor would one readily do so, for there was something in the head, body, and hands which, behind the gentle, lazy, pliable manner, reminded one of a cat.

Tora both felt and saw this, but to-day it was with more curiosity than fear.

“What an unexpected pleasure to meet you here; have you been here long?”

“I came here yesterday evening with Fru Gröndal; she was in the town.”

“Was she, indeed?”

And the two slipped into a conversation about the journey here, the weather, the place, without having been introduced to each other—a conversation without any other object than to have an excuse for looking at one another. The conversation was in short, disjointed sentences, without colour or calculation, except in so far that the last remark never remained the last.

He stood below and studied her with growing pleasure; the shape of her head, her features, her manners and expression. The eyes really shone under the long thick lashes—what colour were they? They looked black, but—— And her figure! her neck, arms, complexion, her dark hair, her

dress; he put himself quite on one side, he was entirely occupied with her. How long this continued, they neither of them knew—it was a considerable time; he did not wish to disturb himself, she did not wish to disturb him. She saw herself in a living mirror, but the pleasure was not an innocent one, for by degrees it made her feel giddy. She collected herself and broke off the conversation; walked across the terrace to some flowers, and occupied herself with their petals, among which she made havoc. He came slowly up, with his umbrella over his shoulder, drawing his left hand along the balustrade.

“Of course you are going to my sister’s this afternoon?”

“Fru Gröndal will get an invitation for me,” she said.

“Of course; we shall have some dancing—will you give me the first waltz?”

She did not look up. “Will you not dance the first waltz with me?”

She felt through her whole being that she ought not to answer him. “I beg your pardon, I forgot that we had not been introduced; but as you know who my sister is, you must have some idea who I am.”

He smiled and came nearer, always with the big umbrella, and with his left hand gliding along the balustrade. She raised herself, but did not answer. “So there is some agreement about the first waltz?” He said it a little carelessly, in rather a patronising way, almost as though he were offended.

He put down the umbrella and turned towards the entrance. “Of course Fru Gröndal is at home.” He went in. Tora was about to add, “But she is not up.” But that would look rather like asking him to stay here. Besides, Fru Gröndal must be so nearly dressed that she could warn him off herself, when she heard him in the sitting-room.

He went in there, but did not come out again. Had Fru Gröndal gone there? No, there was no talking. She went towards the steps and looked into the mirror; the bedroom door was wide open.

Down the steps she flew, and through the garden, away into the wood, out of it again, for it was too wet; and out on to the mountain towards the sea, under the lee of the wood; there she sat down on a large stone. She was trembling; her breast heaved as though it would burst.

“Fröken Holm!” called Fru Gröndal; “Fröken Holm!”

She really was dressed, then. That call must be either from the terrace or the garden. Perhaps Fru Gröndal had been out when he went into the sitting-room, that was why there had been no talking. Tora could not collect herself sufficiently to answer Fru Gröndal, and as she had not answered the first time, it seemed to her that she must disregard the other calls as well. Very soon she heard no more.

What time was it? Could he have come to make a call on a lady at that early hour? And to come straight from the landing-place, not to his sister's, but to Fru Gröndal's. What was the time? But she had not her watch with her, she had forgotten it.

There were the white trousers coming up the hill towards her, and the umbrella as well! She was pursued and discovered. "Dear me, did you not hear Fru Gröndal call you?" Tora did not answer. "And you are so wet—with-out an umbrella too; pray come under mine. Why did you run away?" No answer. "Fru Gröndal has been making egg-flip for us the whole morning."

"Has she really?"

"Yes, really; her husband was to have been here this morning, and he owes me some egg-flip. But he has not come."

"What time is it?"

"What on earth do you want to know for? It is just eleven."

"Just eleven?"

"Yes, see for yourself." He held out a massive American gold watch towards her, opening the case as he did so. She was silent and walked on. As they approached the garden, she asked him how he had found her so quickly. Why, he had seen her footprint in the sand here, and he had drawn his own conclusion. No one would go into the wood when it was so wet, so she must be on the hill.

They eat egg-flip together very merrily; but an hour later Tora was sitting alone in her room, in the attics—she had fastened the door; and at six o'clock the same evening, as the guests were assembling at the Wingaards', she was on board the steamer, which was returning to the town.

What had happened? Nothing! Absolutely nothing! But like the fog over the landscape, which still hung there, although not so low as in the morning, there lay some-



thing over all this, which was vague and puzzling to her. She could not bear to be with Fürst and Fru Gröndal. She could not be natural with them ; everything she said or did seemed preposterous.

She did not, therefore, venture to go to the party ; the mere thought of waltzing with Fürst made her tremble.

It would not do. There was nothing for it but to fly. She made herself appear terribly foolish, in trying to find reasons for her flight ; such a one as that she had crumpled her white dress in her hat-box, could be answered by a hot iron ; that her mother expected her, presupposed a letter by carrier pigeon.

All the same, here she was on board the steamer. It was really an achievement. She was delighted. The rest of the passengers were up on the bridge, or in the deck cabin ; the windows were open. She went forward where there were two or three work-people. She sat down a long way from them. It thoroughly delighted her when the steamer swept pass the islets at the entrance ; it seemed as though she were leaving something oppressive.

The evening was fine, notwithstanding the fog ; it was mild, and the rain had ceased. The islands among which they steamed stood out clear, their many tinted hills, the green patches of grass, the gardens and houses—for almost all were inhabited—were seen with unusual distinctness, as well as the people who sat or stood about, and watched the steamer as she passed. Tora thought she would like to live in such a place ; she made a day-dream that she did so ; she sat there and arranged her house according to her taste,—this time with great simplicity, that soothed her after what she had left.

All at once the discomfort began again, a feeling of depression, the old sense of insecurity—only a recollection, of course, she thought, and drew a long breath, but she felt impelled to turn round and look behind her.

There he stood on the deck, four or five steps away from her. He bowed and smiled. Deadly white, then crimson, she turned angrily away.

“Come, you must not be angry with me ; I would rather go back to the town with you, than dance till five o'clock in the morning. Is that so strange ? I am not so contemptible for that, am I ?”

He sat down behind her ; she knew it, and moved a little way from him.

"Why do you do that now? Of course it is only to talk to you that I have come with you ; you can see that."

A feeling of both shame and fear came over her ; she was alone now, separated from all the others. She felt as though she could have called to them by name. Whenever Tora felt how solitary she was, she began to cry.

He noticed it, and in quite another tone of voice he said, "Dear Fröken Holm, you must not misunderstand me ; I do not want to annoy you, anything rather than that. It would give me great pleasure to talk to you, I confess ; may I not be allowed to do so? Why may I not?" She did not answer, but she ceased crying.

He slipped into conversation on indifferent topics, and calmed her, lamenting that they had not become acquainted earlier. "The first time I saw you I said to myself—well, no matter what I said, but I had just a little wish to see you again ; it was fulfilled quite unexpectedly to-day ; but we did not have any conversation, you were so strange ; why was that? Well perhaps you were not strange, but why did you go away? I might imagine that I was to blame for that. You certainly did not want to go before I came—eh? You have made me quite curious, I assure you. If I really did drive you away, I should like to hear what I frightened you with ; was it with the big umbrella—by chance? Ah, now you are laughing ! But why will you insist in travelling about *par tout*, Fröken? Just tell me that." He moved a little nearer, and she remained sitting ; he chatted and joked without any pause. She once turned half round to look at his roguish face, and then she laughed with him. He was very amusing.

Close by one of the numerous stopping-places was a red house, where a number of young people were gathered round some gymnastic apparatus. A young man and a young woman each held a rope in a "giant's strides." He set off after her with all his strength ; a few steps on the ground, and then a long swing in the air ; then again a few steps, and another long swing. Would he reach her? Never ! She was the lighter, the more active, and she had undoubtedly stronger legs—she ran trip, trip, trip, trip ; her legs hardly seemed to be apart, and how she flew swinging through the

air! Her hair, her dress streaming after her, a very Iris! Both Fürst and Tora followed this chase, silent but eager. Tora felt his presence at her back, like fire; he had come nearer; and, turning abruptly, she went into the cabin and sat down among the others. He was standing on the landing-place when she went on shore at the Point; he offered her his hand, but she turned away; he wanted to carry her box, but she ran off. He went on board again to go up into the harbour.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE HUNT.

TORA reached home about the same time as her father, who had been out sailing with some friends. He was helped on shore, and his reception at home was warm. The children fled, Tora locked herself into the attic, and dare not even go down to supper, although she was hungry. She had to open the door at last for her sisters; she soon began to quarrel with them, they had been wearing her best shoes and had almost spoiled them. It ended in one of them flinging the shoes at her, and they came to blows over it. Complaints followed, which brought the angry mother upstairs. Tora cried herself to sleep like a child.

The next day she tried to help her mother in the house, not without some hard words and sarcasms about such fine elegant ladies only being in the way. Still she set her will to the task of being a help to her mother, especially in mending the clothes. She gave what she could from her little annuity, so that they were on fairly friendly terms; but it seemed to Tora that she had a right to have some time to herself. A little while before supper, she would take the ferry across to the other side and go up either into the wood above "The Estate" or into the "Groves." There was no peace at home. Whether she went to the wood or "The Estate," she always landed at Bommen, and went up that way, though it was not exactly the most direct one; but she did not know a prettier place in the town than the

house in the large garden there, so she gave herself the pleasure of looking at it every day.

Both house and garden had belonged to the Wingaard family, but they had exchanged them for the Fürsts' house in the market-place, where the Wingaards carried on the Fürst business. The brother-in-law, Niels Fürst, therefore now owned the house in the large garden at Bommen.

Tora passed it with a little apprehension, although the man she dreaded was certainly not there, but on board his ship. This became a change and occupation, and formed, as it were, an incident in her walk.

Every time it was over, she went more carelessly up to the wood, or out to the "Groves." In a little Norwegian town like this, all the girls go about as they like. She met others and joined them, or went on by herself; generally she wished to be alone for an hour or two; she went, as a rule, to some particular spot, and when there took out her book, if she had one, or else she wove day-dreams without the aid of books. Or else, and this was now almost always the case, she wrote long letters, one every day, about any curious experience. She had her portfolio with her and an ink bottle in her pocket; she lay on the grass with the portfolio on a stone, or she sat on a stone with the portfolio spread out on her lap and the ink-bottle by her side. That did splendidly: true open-air letters, where the words seemed to fly before the wind, and every varying thought found ready utterance. And how delightful it was in the thicket, just dappled by the sunbeams, enlivened by the twittering of the birds, a little startled by the rustle of a squirrel in the boughs! The distant sounds from the harbour, from the works by the river-bank, the voices in the "Groves" and on the road, with every now and then a strain of music, only made the silence of the place where she was sitting the deeper. This was her one bit of summer poetry. As soon as she opened her eyes in the morning, she began to long for it; the noise and quarrelling in the house passed by her as though they did not concern her—it was here that she lived. Her great expedition to Fru Gröndal, and her remarkable return home in the steamer, were of course recorded up here in letters to Milla, Nora, and Tinka; on the fourth day, she read over the work of the three previous ones; she was very pleased, she knew she had successfully varied the theme.

She became, however, somewhat thoughtful as she read the first letter, for she remembered the others, and the difference had become by degrees too great. If the girls were by chance to compare them, one of those tiresome scenes might easily result when she would have to pay the reckoning. No, she would have no more of that. In the first letter she had treated the matter seriously, described her confusion, her blunders, her fright; no one who read it could doubt that she had been with a person of whom she had been frightened. In the second letter she made fun of herself, of him, and the whole affair. In the third, she described how a maiden with dark hair was wandering on a foreign strand, when a merman rose from the sea who had fair whiskers and curly hair. In her terror, the dark maiden fled on board a ship, to return to her own country. But the merman swam after the ship the whole way, with his hand on his heart; when she got to land he gave a wail of sorrow, she heard it still in her dreams at night.

She tore up all the letters, and did not write any others.

Still she continued her walks. She had not the slightest idea that Niels Fürst had returned to the town, that a friend had taken his duty for him, and that he was quietly studying languages to prepare himself for a new career, more brilliant than his earlier one, and that he was living in his own house. Still less did she know that on the first day of his return to the town he had seen her, in the looking-glass fixed outside his window, look shyly across at the house as she passed, and that he saw the same thing happen the next day. He knew that this was not the shortest way up to the wood, which was where she went the first day, or out to the "Groves," where she had gone on the second; on both occasions he had put on his hat and gone out, the third day he sat ready to follow her; now he thought he understood. He knew something about girls who will and will not; they acted exactly in this way.

To-day she came as usual, glanced apprehensively across, and strolled on with her portfolio under her arm. Some one stopped her, and she thus chanced to look round and so detected him. He was already advancing quickly; he was in pursuit, he had struck the trail.

She said good-bye, and as soon as she could do so unobserved, she quickened her ordinary pace to the quickest of

which she was capable. She was frightened, unaccountably frightened. Perhaps it would have been wiser to have turned back, but to-day she could not endure his gaze, and there was no one else about. So she walked on, and on, and on, but suspected that he was gaining on her—she almost knew it. She dare not run on the high-road, but she trusted to the fact that she was more at home in the "Groves" than he was, and that she could slip away. She therefore left the road and made her way through the wood; she saw to her terror that he plunged into it as well, so she ventured to run up the hill, but in the direction from which he came; then she stooped down behind a large stone. She was quite successful, for almost directly afterwards she saw him pass by a little below the place where she crouched, her heart beating as though it would burst her dress. Here, where no one could see him, he ran, he climbed, he jumped—nothing checked his straight upward course. She waited till he was out of sight, and then ran off through the wood in the opposite direction from that in which he had gone; she did not stop till she found herself far above "The Estate" on a rock under a fir-tree, with leafy trees all round, and, while hot and panting she looked round her, thinking how wonderful the view was which she took in in a rapid glance, he rose before her mind's eye as he had looked when he hurried past the stone. He was horrible! That man could do anything!

After that, she could never get rid of him. It was always he, nothing but he; or rather every moment of the day she fled from him, but he always reappeared.

Her sisters reported to her that he hung about the house and looked in; walked past and looked in, talked to them, asked them to remember him to her. This immensely excited them, they were proud of it; his remark that Tora was "the handsomest girl" had reached them too. But Tora's terror increased; she was pursued. She knew that he would not give up.

Where could she go to? None of the Rendalens were at home. She could go to them after the holidays, but nearly three weeks still remained. She could not speak to any one else, she was too much ashamed. She did think once of shoemaker Hansen, but Fru Hansen was severe, she would not exactly understand. Her mother she never once thought of. But after all it was a thing which entirely concerned herself; she need be in no man's power if she did not choose.

No, but when she could not by any means get him out of her thoughts?

On Saturday evening she had flung herself upon her bed, as weary as though she had passed the day in the hardest manual labour. She lay there and looked at the yards of a ship which was being towed past. She watched the folds in the loosely hanging sails which were swaying in the wind. The vessel was so near that she could almost have touched her. Outside there was a heavy sea, the storm driving the swell up into the harbour: she, too, longed to find a haven! It was Saturday evening, to-morrow she would have to go to church. Karl Vangen's face smiled to her as she remembered this, and she felt happy before she fell asleep. If he had been a girl she would have gone to him—just to *him*—with the trouble which oppressed her.

The next day she occupied a seat at the furthest end of the church. Karl Vangen had met her, and said how nice it was that she was coming up to them again to help Fru Rendalen. On account of this remark she had chosen the most remote seat; she did not feel sure that she might not begin to cry.

She did not, however; there was something soothing in the church and the stillness and the people, which was unlike the summer day outside. But when Karl Vangen went into the pulpit, and his prayer was the one which he had used on her first school-day—that on meeting, almost word for word the same—it disturbed her: that even Karl Vangen's prayer should be a lesson from earlier days. This little coincidence occupied her, and she did not follow him. She gathered that the sermon dealt with conversion, and that Karl Vangen, as was his custom, illustrated what he was saying by examples from real life. But she had heard these examples at school, every one of them.

She was roused by the name of John Wesley. His conversion, Vangen considered, was the most thorough, the fullest in every particular, that he knew of. He related it, and then passed on to give examples of sudden conversions, especially some by Wesley himself; other natures with different pasts, with different kinds of knowledge, influenced by other fears. He wished to speak of these sudden conversions separately to-day. He had known a young girl who had a burning desire for grace for her sins, which she could

by no means obtain, until one day she saw Rubens' picture of the Crucifixion, and Mary Magdalene standing with long flowing hair at the foot of the cross. She would be Mary Magdalene. And all at once it was a joy to her to imagine herself at the foot of the cross in the place of Mary Magdalene; her thoughts dwelt on this so powerfully that it seemed as though she, and no one else, stood there. At once she received the knowledge that it was for *her* that Jesus was crucified, *her* sins were forgiven. She was seized with a great, great joy. The preacher knew several such examples, especially among women. They had clung so persistently to some single incident in the life of Jesus, some single word of His, something special in the mystery of grace, and had gazed upon it until it had the effect of a strong light, a special knowledge. From that time all became clear to them, their sins were taken from them; their will became stronger from that day and hour.

Tora did not hear more, least of all that it was *against* this, that Vangen wished to speak. Then and there her mind was occupied with an attempt to follow these examples. His too familiar voice murmured on; everything round her seemed to fade away. She saw Jesus on the cross in a strange country, with driving black clouds above Him, each height, each valley, each tree veiled and mourning. She saw His eyes close, His chest rise and fall, and it all became night. She felt her own small sorrows hidden in that awful moment. How long she remained in this condition she did not know. The sermon was not over, she could not therefore go; but she could not listen, she did not desire to do so.

When at length she left the church she had only one wish—to be able to renew that vision as soon as she could.

Through all these days she had not been outside the door, she must go this afternoon. From fear of Fürst she went over towards the mountain, and from there up into the wood along by the churchyard, and then on to the big fir-tree on the right, and sat down on the stone under it—it was smooth and flat. She had not come to dream or to enjoy herself, but for real help to consecrate her life. These weary days had enlightened her; she knew now that her character combined a little of everything; that she wished for a little of everything, even of what was wrong, so that she would be



an easy prey for a rogue. She had not been sufficiently guarded from the first; she had been completely unprepared—nay, the danger had had something attractive in it.

This must now be changed; she would do any kind of work, if only it would be a restraint on her. She had no more ambition now, nothing but dread.

She fell upon her knees, and with her blood coursing the faster from her hurried ascent, she offered her prayer in her abasement. It was the most humble, piteous pleading. Her distress was extreme. Power to resist the will which conquered hers! She did not doubt for a moment that her petition would be instantly and literally granted.

Mentally she saw herself endowed with strength, she saw herself without fear—even with a mission; no matter what it was, so that it continued. And that should regulate her life. Willingly! Always! She could not picture to herself greater joy, honour, or riches than to give herself to some hard task; it was her nature to wish for extremes.

And now she began to contemplate herself—no, she came to a stand, her mind was disturbed when she thought of her friends. Milla's greatest anxiety in her last letter had been lest the weather should not continue fine, and Nora had feared that they might forget to send her some new music. Why should she alone, who was hiding here, have such dreadful trouble? Her desolate position ought to have made people pity her, but it only encouraged them.

She sat, turned away from the view, leaning against the big fir-tree. Before her she saw alder woods, nothing but young luxuriant alder woods, and fronds of bracken in a thick mass. Ah! how impotent all that was, that they had discussed together at the Society's meetings, and at other places. Only a few weeks ago, and now she must hide herself here. If this became known, she would no doubt lose the small status she had gained for herself. She would hardly go again to the Engels, she would not be allowed to be Milla's friend, perhaps not be able even to go up to Fru Rendalen's again; she began to cry, but she tried to collect herself. The image of the sly, excited, accursed face that she had seen from behind the stone down below, seemed to stab her—to thrill through her; she understood that the dread with which she terrified herself was a greater danger to her than the actual man.

She ought to have gone home again, but it was a shame not to test her strength, and so she stayed there.

As Tora, a short time before, was climbing the hill, Niels Fürst was sauntering up and down the deck of a vessel, the captain of which he knew, and just as she reached the flat stone under the fir-tree he had taken up the new ship's telescope to try it; he focussed it and turned it towards the river-bank, and from there gradually upwards across the wooden slopes. Tora had just seated herself on the stone as the telescope was turned to that point, and he recognised her.

He took a short cut across the market-place, and turned up to the right of "The Estate" gardens.

Latterly he had thought of nothing but her, he could not occupy himself, and he slept badly. He had never been in pursuit of so beautiful a girl before.

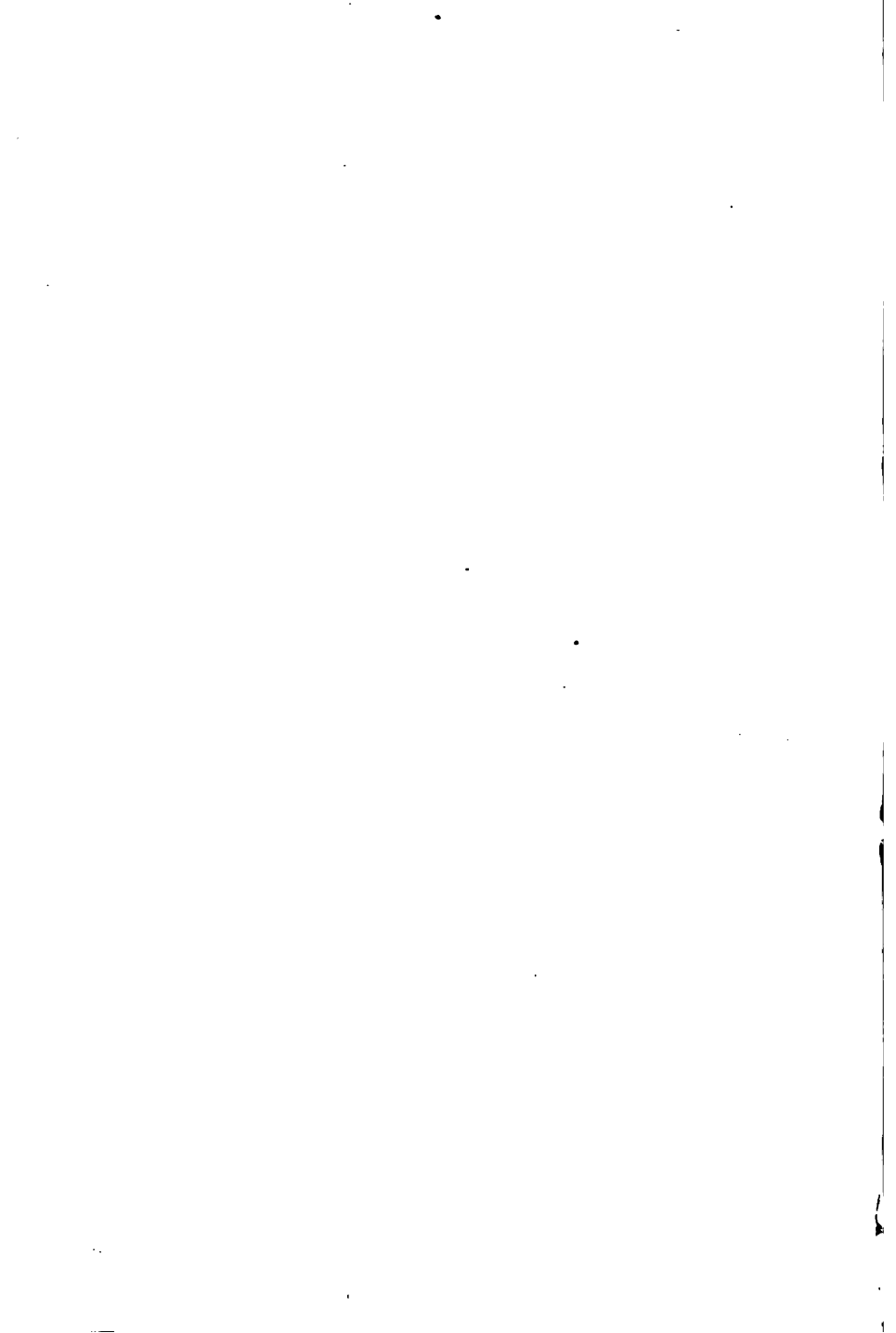
Although day after day she passed his house, she constantly eluded his pursuit, and all his efforts were still fruitless. All that was needed was to find her in her hiding-place; one could not do her a greater service. Nay, the oftener she hid herself, the greater would be the refinement of her pleasure in being discovered. Now he understood why she had left Fru Gröndal's that day—now he saw why she had cried on board the steamer. Ah, these little girls! But the pursuit would become wearisome if it continued much longer. His own credit was at stake as well; no one must suppose that they could befooled *him*. His character, too, would be safer when this was all settled; she would be silent then. If only she did not see him too soon, if he could only get near enough to hold her with his eyes!

Notwithstanding his intense excitement, he advanced skilfully, not by the path, but straight up through the wood under cover of the leaves. He scrambled where he could not walk, he climbed where he could not scramble. She sat there, searching for some definite idea which might be extended until it entirely occupied and engrossed her mind; but she was not successful—there was something which always distracted her. Just then a branch snapped down below. She had constantly felt tempted to turn round. Was there really anything behind her? She looked down below her. At first she saw nothing; yes, the branches moved and she heard

the leaves rustle. That might be a horse or cow from "The Estate"; they came up here for pasture. All the same, she felt very hot; she wanted to get up and go away; but her eyes continued fixed on the branches below, there was something dark beneath them. A head pushed its way through, a man—*he!* How in the world——? Did he know that she——? How did he come to——? She bewildered herself with useless, frightened questions. He looked up. With all her power she raised herself, though her feet felt as heavy as lead; but she did not turn from him, or attempt to go away, and by degrees she lost the desire to do so. Now there was only the stone between them, a wave of terror swept over her and roused her; she turned her head now, staggered a few steps—and met him. She leaned forward, he took her hand, his arm slipped under hers—she felt as though a burning band were round her. She fell so unexpectedly and so heavily that he nearly fell with her.

**VI**

**WHAT FIDELITY WILL SAY**



## CHAPTER I.

### HAPPINESS.

"DEAR NORA,

"I know beforehand that this will not be a regular letter, I have no time for one. I almost think that you had better not show it to the others, they will hardly understand my feelings. Last, but not least, there is something which divides the others from us two; I feel that instinctively. If only I could do away with some of what I—feel, I had almost written again. You must know that I have passed the greatest, the most beautiful, the most enchanting day in my life.

"Ah! now you are curious. I will not bother you, but all the same I must begin with how and why I came to do so.

"When we arrived at Copenhagen; who should meet us at the station but Niels Fürst! Of course it had been arranged between him and papa. I saw that at once, but papa is so clever at keeping a secret. Do you know where Niels Fürst came from? From Sofiero. Yes, now it is written, and you understand the whole thing. I told you that, long ago, papa had had the honour of being invited by his Majesty to come and see Sofiero the next time he went abroad. There are not many Norwegians to whom that has happened, so it was very flattering to papa.

"He had said nothing to me; he did not wish to make me nervous before the time, he said. Fürst came straight from Sofiero—fancy, he is perhaps to be made orderly officer to the prince who is a sailor,—his Royal Highness Prince Oscar, that is to say. Fürst told us at what time the train would leave the next day. Good heavens! actually the next day. We were expected, then! I was not allowed to make any toilette,

I was to appear just in my travelling dress, as papa was to do as well. That naughty Lieutenant Fürst—you know he is related to us—he calls me cousin, though I am not one. He said I was pretty enough as I was. Do you know him?

"It was now a question of getting some sleep after the journey—one does not look well when one has not slept. I have never struggled so hard to go to sleep before. I was terribly startled, you see. I thought about the stupidest things in the world. Do you remember chief custom-house officer Jacobsen's nose? I lay and stared at his nose, till I really fell asleep thinking of it and of the town bailiff; and I can tell you I was so tired, that when I was once asleep, I slept like a top. I was, thank goodness, none the worse when I got up. But it was awful, really awful, later on. You have never been in such circumstances, so perhaps it may seem odd to you that the more I thought of the important moment, and that I had no lady to refer to (men can never tell one anything, and so they laugh), the more terrified I became. It was rather a cold morning, and one thing with the other, the cold and the fright—Fürst called it cannon fever—I was most miserably uncomfortable. It was dreadfully silly; at last I could not altogether conceal it. You understand. But I consoled myself with the thought that I was not the first girl to whom this had happened, when she was to be presented at Court. I was really quite ill at last, and therefore have hardly any impression of the journey, or what we talked about. For all that, I got into a dispute. Fürst said that all the monarchies were trying to gather the wealthy classes about themselves against the lower classes. That seems to me to be too bad. Is the monarchy meant to protect itself? I thought it was to protect the lower classes, and I said so too. Papa began to tease me about the Society and school, and Karen Lote's history lessons; you can hear him, can't you? Fürst asked who was to protect the wealthy classes in that case? They must protect themselves, I should suppose. At all events, it is wicked of them to betray the lower classes, is it not?

"Oh, how enchanting Oresund is! When we crossed (I forgot to say that we came there, that is, to Helsingör, by railway) you see what I am to-day. . . . No, I will pass that altogether, or I shall never be ready. Father wants me to go out with him this morning, you will soon see why. I

will begin with the Palace, which can be seen from the Sound; it is magnificently situated, but is not so large as we had expected. So at last we arrived at Helsingborg. There, now you *will* be astonished—a royal carriage was waiting for us. Both papa and Fürst took it as a matter of course, but I am certain that they were at least as astonished as I was.

“The carriage was just like any other; it is the livery which is the important point. But I was in the most deadly terror how it would all go off. The weather had, however, become delightful. I was obliged to leave them for a moment before we got into the carriage.

“You can imagine how upset I was by it all, when I tell you that I perspired through my gloves. Of course I had another pair to put on when I got there. Papa drove me to despair by saying, ‘My dear child, how wretched you look.’ I really believe I had tears in my eyes, for Fürst, who was opposite to me, began to try to amuse me, but I hardly heard what he said. But still through it all I noticed that the formation was a mixture of sandstone and coal strata, and that there was a lot of iron in the rocks. I thought of Rendalen and his maps and collections. You cannot imagine how all this passed through my mind in the midst of my fright. If any one would have taken me home again, at the price of every pretty thing I possess, I would have accepted the offer, I can assure you. We drove through a little wood, and came out into a great open quadrangle—the Palace.

“When I saw the quadrangle and the grass there—how do things come into one’s head?—I remembered so distinctly the lesson at school when I learned that *bowling-green* meant in English just such a place as this; and that Fru Rendalen came into the class at the moment and asked why it was called a bowling-green? and that Tora whispered it to me. How cleverly Tora could do such things! I have no further recollection of where we drew up. I got out of the carriage, when a very grand gentleman met us, and gave me his arm. We were shown to some rooms. A lady came with me, thank goodness. I was not myself till that moment. I looked at myself in the glass. What a fright I was! I saw that at once in papa’s face when we met in a sitting-room. Fancy, I never noticed in what direction we



went or where the room was. Guess where we were going to. Into the garden, where we were to lunch with their Majesties. There could not have been greater condescension to the townsfolk of a little Norwegian town, could there? Do you remember how we dressed our dolls for a Court ball? The same gentleman—Fürst does not remember his name, but I believe he was a gentleman-in-waiting—escorted me and said something to me in Swedish. I could not understand him, my wits were wool-gathering.

"No one could have been in a greater state of mind. When I saw the garden and came into it—it all whirled round me, trees, people, table, servants, chairs—the awful fright I was in almost made me drop. I used all my strength, I can assure you. The gentleman whose arm I had, must have felt my hand tremble, or have read my trouble in my face; he told me not to be frightened, their Majesties were so charming. I understood that.

"Oh dear, and how wonderfully good they were; especially the King. Oh, that smile, the shape of the hand, those eyes! It was a perfect ocean of goodness—but more than goodness. There is something, especially in the eyes, which fascinates one. I will use the word heaven rather than ocean to describe those eyes, for then you can better understand what the Swedes call *tjusande*.\* There is no word in Norse for it. Yes, *tjusande*! Only southern people have such eyes. How cold and egotistical we are, I must say it, when we look at them. At all events, I feel it so.

"Now you shall hear something wonderful: from the time—I may say from the very second—in which his Majesty's eyes rested on me, I felt well again. Well, did I say? I felt this look fill and warm my whole being. I felt it—it is strange, is it not? but on my honour it is true—I felt it in my knees; yes, in my knees. There is only one word in our language which can fully express my state of mind; I am almost in the same state now, merely with telling you about it, the others would not understand me. I was in a state of *beatitude*. Perhaps it is profane, or at least wrong, to use this word in such a sense, but it is *true*.

"What do you think the King said? "Welcome to my house, Fröken," in the prettiest, sweetest Norse I ever heard.

\* Enchanting.

"The Queen smiled. She asked me what town I came from. The King answered for me.

"What is the clergyman called?' asked the Queen.

"Karl Vangen,' I said; but that was stupid; I ought to have mentioned the Dean's name or that of one of the elder clergy. At the same time the King welcomed my father, who stood there with Fürst, and said to him, 'I think the lieutenant has excellent taste.' That is exactly what he said, word for word; I have often thought of it since, for it evidently showed that Niels Fürst had spoken about me in these high places. I did not know that they would trouble themselves about anything so insignificant.

"We then went to table, the same elegant gentleman took me. 'Well?' said he in Swedish, and I hastened to answer that I was enchanted. 'Every one is,' he assured me. We did not sit down, but walked about as we liked, and first one and then another came up and was presented to me. Only think! one of them was a Count, another a Baron, then a Countess, a Baroness, and a Master of the Horse; he in particular came and walked about, and talked continually.

"It was not exactly what they said, but their whole style and manner had something incredibly intellectual and winning. But there was something as well in the place and surroundings which helped, for I felt as though I were not on earth.

"The servants themselves made me feel uneasy and small, they gave me the impression of being so careful, so attentive, of knowing so well how everything should be.

"I did not always do things right. We Norwegians do not learn anything. No, there was a nobility, a beauty and kindness, and it was all so bright and yet so stately; none of the Princes were there, though. What we had to eat (I hardly touched anything) I can say by heart, for I wrote it down in my diary, and I will copy it for Tora; that and the furniture of the castle, and a thousand other things which you do not care about. You do not understand anything about nice dishes, but I arrange it so as to tell you all the more intellectual things, and you must not show it to any one. My word, if you do! Nora, you don't know, but I must have one confidante, or happiness would be a burden. I have never felt as I have done yesterday and to-day. I

am quite upset. I will write to Tora about my dress. Of course I have a new one, which I think would have surprised you all, although there is not much to be done in black. Still I think it suits me. I got a glimpse of myself in several mirrors at the castle, for you must understand that we were shown over it. On the side where we came in first, to the left, is the great apartment where the royal entertainments are held in all their grandeur. Ah! if one could only be present. This room is decorated in white, with an arabesque on a blue ground, and great big pictures, one by Markus Larsson, full of sunlight, but I don't know what it is, it is so extraordinary; and divans and chairs in blue silk—an enormous chandelier of different coloured glass, magnificent! Near the wall two black figures, dressed in red and gold, holding lamps, real works of art. A huge marble fireplace, the shape we call '*Pis*,'\* but the word is so ugly; and a richly gilded clock and porcelain vases; a particularly noticeable flower-stand in Japanese porcelain, very curious. Also a Chinese or Japanese writing-table made of black wood, with gold ornaments. But that was in the cabinet.

"But no; I will scratch out about the cabinet. You shall read all about it in Tora's letter. I will just tell you that you look out from the great balcony over the Sound, and see all the ships and steamers, and Helsingborg and Kronborg. There is not a view like it in the North. How should there be? Do you think we did not go into the bedrooms? I don't know if that were right, but we did. I really have to restrain myself from telling you about them at once, and about their Majesties' sitting-rooms. Imagine white silk hangings over both walls and ceiling, with a light red border, in the Queen's room. And such a writing-table! The King's rooms were so nobly simple. On the pillow in the King's bedroom I saw two hairs—you know what sharp eyes I have. I lagged a little behind, and took them without any one noticing it. I put them into the case of my watch. But this reminds me of the great event. When we went into the garden again, the light fell very strongly right on the gate, and I saw something written on the railing. I went up to it; it was in French, and undoubtedly by a lady. . . . Yes, you see I have scratched

\* Open hearth.

that out again. For when one has made up one's mind not to repeat a thing, it shall not be repeated. It was horrid. I rubbed it out with my finger; but I had to be quick, and I got a splinter into my finger, through my glove, and made it bleed. So I rubbed it out with my blood. I have not said a word to any living being about it until now, nor must you tell it to any one. To papa I said I had pricked my finger while I was trying to gather a rose.

"If any one should have seen me—but they were looking at something in the garden; or if any one had seen what was written before I did? Is it not extraordinary?"

"The royal party and their attendants were no longer in the garden, but the gentleman who had met us, now joined us. As he did not show any intention of taking us to the others, papa asked him to convey our respectful thanks to their Majesties, and we then left the garden. The carriage came up again, and my elegant cavalier handed me a beautiful bouquet from the royal garden. What do you think of that? It is before me as I write. The flowers are of the Swedish and Norwegian colours. To be sure, Fürst says they are the commonest flowers, but I thought there was more meaning in it than that. I especially admire a lily and a rose. I put a few forget-me-nots into my letter, for I must tell you, my dear Nora, that I am not coming home again. I hope this will be nearly as great an astonishment to you as it was to me, when papa told me this morning. I am to go to Paris to learn French thoroughly.

"Is that a determination he has only lately come to, or why did he not tell me before?' you will naturally inquire.

"You must know that we start to-morrow. What do you think of that? Papa cannot spare the time to remain away longer.

"But why did we not go direct?' you ask again. I asked the same thing, although, Heaven knows, I would not have missed yesterday for the world.

"Papa answered that he came to the determination yesterday. Lieutenant Fürst drew his attention to the fact that all well-bred Swedish ladies speak French as well as they do Swedish, and that all Germans and Russians know it; besides which, every well-educated woman ought to speak French like her mother tongue.

"It is not disagreeable to me to travel. To be sure, it

will be for at least a year that I shall be separated from you all, but we shall have all the more to tell each other when we meet again.

"There is one thing I must ask you about. Lieutenant Fürst says that—— I had got so far when father came in this morning, and I had to hide my letter. He took me out all in a hurry. We are only just home again this evening, and do you know what for? To pack up and start at once. A fresh determination! Lieutenant Fürst will give father the pleasure of coming with him. I shall put my letter just as it is into the letter-box at the station. I suspect that if I were to read it through again you would not get it.—Your loving

"MILLA."

Nora and her mother had left the Baths when the letter got there. It was forwarded to Christiania, where they were staying. When Nora returned she found a telegram, dated from Hamburg, which ran: "Do not read the letter which is coming; send it me, 'Hôtel Continental, Paris.'" But the letter had been already read.

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## CHAPTER II.

### A MISFORTUNE.

Soon after the beginning of the term Miss Hall began a series of lectures for the ladies of the town; it had become the fashion to hear a little of all the objectional things which their daughters and sisters had learned about in the past year. The lectures were held twice a week in the great laboratory, which as a rule was full. Most of those who had been in the senior class the previous year, and had now left, attended these lectures. One day late in October, when they were assembling in the lecture-hall, Tora came in, accompanied by her friends. There was general astonishment and greeting. Where had she been? Why was she so pale? And, good gracious, how thin! It was true, then, that she had been ill. Was it in the west country that she had been

staying? When had she returned to the town? Would she live up here now?

The conversation ceased as Fru Rendalen and Miss Hall came in, and those who were not seated turned to find places. But it was soon seen that there were not sufficient seats; the crowd had never been so great, for Miss Hall was lecturing upon certain phenomena of the nerves which had till now been overlooked or denied, and the lectures became more interesting every time.

To gain space, the large double door leading to the entrance-hall was opened, the outer door being closed. A number of chairs were placed in the hall, and two rows as well in front of the laboratory table. Fru Rendalen's commanding voice was heard giving directions, till quiet was obtained. Tora and her friends found places at the furthest end of one of these rows of chairs.

Miss Hall took up her subject where she had broken off at the last lecture.

"The health and morality of mankind demanded that woman's nerves should be strengthened. It was not enough that she should feel physically comfortable, her will must be ripened by knowledge; she must have an aim in life which will not readily allow her to remain the mere slave of another human being." In a professional manner she ran shortly through what she had said before, for the benefit of those who had not been present.

"People with weak nerves, and especially those of an hysterical temperament, can by certain mechanical operations be brought into a 'hypnotic,' 'somnambulistic,' or 'magnetic' condition. This condition was impotence combined with consciousness; we did, while in this state, what he wished, who had brought us into it. We were his prey, and that not only while we slept, but afterwards when we were awakened—we absolutely obeyed the commands we had received while we were in this condition." Miss Hall reminded her hearers of one or two examples she had given.

"In this state certain mediums could visit other places, read the thoughts of others, both near and far. Some few could even see into futurity.

"This fact could no longer be denied, nor could it be explained. At one time it was believed that this result was

dependent on belief ; now it is known that belief has nothing to do with it. *Certain people could bring themselves* into this abnormal condition, some by great exertion, others merely by wishing it. They all accomplish this—with whatever object—by fixing their minds upon some single thing, either in their thoughts or in the exterior world.

“Most of us know a little of the effect of doing this, but only those with weak nerves and in certain conditions can bring themselves by it into a state of excitement and abstraction. Many conversions have taken place by this means, especially among women. In this way we come to-day to what is the most dangerous for women. Some people have the power of bringing others, and especially women, into this condition without the ordinary mechanical means, without approaching them, without any movement, merely by a look. They can force people to look at them, and, with their eyes on theirs, command their will.”

Miss Hall related a story which she had heard of a very celebrated singer. One day she was in a railway carriage ; the train had just stopped, and she was looking out of the window furthest from the platform, when she felt an uncomfortable sensation, felt constrained to turn round ; she met the gaze of a pair of eyes which seemed to stab her, and which looked straight into hers. She hurried out at once and changed compartments, but the man followed her ; he was probably aware of his power and wished to use it. The lady found her *Impresario*, and begged him to free her “from those green eyes.” It was done, but she felt certain that otherwise she would have been lost. “Now the Prima Donna happened to be conscious of her own weakness, but how many are so ? More especially if touch is added to the power of the eyes, they are lost. A man who does not know what it is, takes it naturally for a desire for more, and acts accordingly. But this need not be so. I dare assert that many a woman who has fallen is as guiltless as an unconscious child.”

A chair is overturned—something heavy and soft falls to the ground ; other chairs are pushed aside, and exclamations are heard from several of the audience as they hastily rise.

Every one now got up, those behind standing on the forms. Through all the bustle they heard the words, “Stand back !” It was Fru Rendalen’s voice. Those who

were standing on the benches could not contrive to see anything, and questioned those before them in whispers. Only those quite near saw what it was, and they made no answer, nor did they move till Fru Rendalen and one or two others had lifted up an inanimate form which Fru Rendalen carried out in her arms—it was Tora. "Stand back!" was heard again.

Miss Hall followed her, then Nora, Tinka, and Anna Rogue, and then several others. Miss Hall hurried forward as soon as they were in the hall, and opened the door of Fru Rendalen's sitting-room; she went quickly in, and arranged a cushion on the sofa, while Fru Rendalen laid down her burden with Nora's assistance. Miss Hall turned to all those who were standing round and asked them to leave the room; as soon as Fru Rendalen could raise herself she sharply repeated the request. They all went away. Outside in the hall they encountered a stream of people coming from the laboratory—every one was curious; others came from the class-rooms, which were opening one after the other. But Nora, who had grown deadly white, took upon herself to stay. When her unhappy friend began to show signs of life she was seized with a fearful suspicion. She ran forward and fastened the doors leading to the two passages. It was hardly done when she heard Tora call out, "Yes, yes, that happened to me! Oh yes." And a fit of despairing crying followed. It sounded through the passages. Supposing any one outside should hear it? Nora flew into the inner passage, meeting the stream of people; she did not clearly know how she could hinder them from coming near the doors. She never knew how she got through the crowd of grown people and children; how she gathered voice and courage to call out that they must not go on, they must all come back again. She mounted the tribune and rapped loudly with a ruler. They came streaming in from all quarters. She rapped again, and every one was quiet. She said: "Tora Holm has had nervous fever. The air in here was too close, and what was said frightened her, and—and—and—oh yes, Miss Hall is coming directly."

She made this last assertion because she did not know what else to say. She rushed away so as not to burst into tears while she was in the room.



Miss Hall, however, could not come, and at last Fru Rendalen had to go in and mount the tribune.

"I must beg your indulgence. Miss Hall is obliged to remain with the invalid. I must partly take the blame on myself for what has happened. Fröken Holm, being so unwell, ought never to have sat in this crowd. I ought also to have noticed her sooner, but I was entirely engrossed in the lecture. It often happens that we who are occupied in teaching allow ourselves to be too much taken up with it." Her voice trembled—she was as white as her own cap; she left without heeding those who wished to speak to her.

In Fru Rendalen's bedroom Nora stood clinging to Tinka, trembling and crying. Tinka was very dejected. Some one peeped in from the passage. As no one forbade it, she entered softly; she looked at them with wide-open questioning eyes—it was Anna Rogne.

"What is it?" she whispered. Nora raised her face; they both looked at her. Anna remembered some remarks which Tora had made in the course of the summer; on these she now formed her opinion—"I suspect the worst." She folded her hands; her tears began to flow. Nora laid her head down again on Tinka's shoulder and cried bitterly. All the time they could hear Tora in the sitting-room; they could not distinguish her words, they were broken, wrung from her by bewilderment, danger, despair. Presently there was silence; the silence was almost worse, there also they were as still as death. At last they could bear it no longer, what did it mean? They exchanged looks, and were on the point of breaking in on them, when they heard heavy, rapid steps across the floor; the door was opened violently, and Fru Rendalen rushed past them with her hands above her head. What is it! in Heaven's name, what is it?

They went in. Tora was lying on the floor, Miss Hall stood over her; on the table was a cup of water. Miss Hall looked up quickly. "Help me to get her up again." They did so; they saw that Tora had not fainted, but she either would not or could not help herself. When she again lay on the sofa, looking like death—ghastly, thin, dishevelled—Miss Hall turned with a meaning look towards the others. They gazed at her terrified; Miss Hall answered their looks with two confirmatory nods.

They all three drew back a few steps. After a little while they slipped out one after the other to Fru Rendalen. She was sitting motionless in a large arm-chair. Nora came and laid her hand on her lap. There was not a word spoken.

Again they heard Tora from within. They heard her explain, cry, bemoan herself. Miss Hall came in to them. "What is it now?" asked Fru Rendalen almost grudgingly, she was quite overdone.

"Did you know," said Miss Hall, "that he came after her again?" They stared at her. "She had taken refuge out on an island with the family of a pilot. He traced her and laid wait for her there as well, the wretch! It was then that she went into the west country, where she was taken ill."

"The poor child!" cried Fru Rendalen. Her sympathy was aroused again; she got up quickly, and went back to Tora; she ought never to have left her.

"My dear, dear child," she said. But the moment Tora saw her she turned and repulsed her with her hands, crying "No, no, no! Don't come; don't say anything—no, no, no! It is not my fault, it is not my fault. Yes, great God, it is my fault!" And she broke into the wildest crying.

All the same, Fru Rendalen came up to her; as soon as she could she said, "Don't take it in this way, my child; we shall never desert you for it." This seemed to calm her, but when Fru Rendalen added that some steps must be taken, she must speak to her son about it, Tora broke out again, "No, no, no! Oh God, no!" She became almost frantic.

"But, dear Tora, you know yourself how things are. It cannot be helped, this will become known everywhere."

"I know, I know; but say nothing to him. No, I must get out of the way first. Do not say anything. There is no need." She raved on, and her voice was so heart-breaking that they all hastened to her. They wanted to quiet her by holding her, but she did not look at them. Each time she freed her hands or her head, and cried and implored, "They must, must, must be silent." In the midst of it all arrived Rendalen. He had chanced to open the bath-room door, and so heard the cries and moans. He thought that they came from the bedroom, and crossed the passage to it. There he stood; Tora sprang up with a shriek, and then suddenly

flung herself down, with her face in her hands. Fru Rendalen went towards her son, took him by the hand, and went with him to his room. Tora tried to rise, to go away. She would live no longer—no, not for the whole world. She struggled with the others, but for Tinka she would have fled. She was beside herself. She implored and struggled. Tinka held her till her strength began to fail; she called for help. Anna fetched Fru Rendalen, and as soon as she came Tora gave in. She allowed herself to be led by her to the sofa, and, when she was calmer, into the bedroom. There she was undressed and laid in a bed, which had been placed by the side of Fru Rendalen's. Fru Rendalen was obliged to sit by her side and hold her hand—even in her sleep she sobbed like a child and bemoaned herself.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### PEACE-MAKING WITHIN, PROPOSALS OF PEACE WITHOUT.

WHEN Fru Rendalen took her son by the hand, when she proposed to speak to him, it was by no means with pleasure that she did so, but, on the contrary, with great anxiety.

The relations between mother and son had, as we know, for some time lost their confidential character; for some time they had not been good, and at the present moment they were actually bad. On his side it almost amounted to a breach. No one could interfere, not even Karl Vangen. Tomas declined to speak on the subject, it pained him if Karl brought it up. This last phase had been produced quite by chance, by an external cause.

According to arrangement, Tora Holm was to have assisted Fru Rendalen; but when she remained ill in the west country, Nora offered to take her place. Nora's gifts lay in a different direction from Tora's—her help was therefore given in a different way; among other things, she was deputed to keep the books. One day when, for want of something to do, Nora chanced to be comparing past and present expenses, turning over the earlier pages of the books,

Tomas, elegant as usual, hurried through the room on his way out. "Who is this Tomasine," Nora inquired, "who has had so much money? It is not your mother, for she always puts 'self' in the entries, and nothing more."

"Tomasine? I never heard of any Tomasine." He came up to her, put down his hat, and in his short-sighted way bent over the register, knitting his light eyebrows, staring with his sharp grey eyes. She turned over the pages and showed him the entries, month after month, which extended back for several years. She could not make much of it, but *he* began to do so; for her the subject had no great interest, for him it appeared all-important. While he studied the books, she observed him and the effect which his near neighbourhood had on her; it was agreeable. She looked at the freckles on his clean-shaven face. In repose the sharp lines of the mouth, the quickness of the eyes, and the power of the brow showed more distinctly; the strong jaw, the bristling red hair, pleased her. She followed the short, slightly recurved, nervous fingers as they turned over the leaves and toyed with the cover of the book. A strong, freckled hand, covered thickly with light bristles, a thick wrist—one felt the strength of the arm, she traced it involuntarily to the shoulder; how strong he must be. She heard the scraping of his necktie on his shirt-front when he drew his breath. She noticed the slight whiff of scent which, now that his head was so near her, mingled with the smell of his skin. Something of half terror, an intoxication, a feeling of increased intelligence came over her—her thoughts moved more quickly, were more highly strung. She wished it might continue—it was absolutely pleasant.

"Where is mother?"

"I don't know."

"This is very curious." He took up his hat and went out. Hardly five minutes later, Fru Rendalen came quickly in from the inner passage. "You excite yourself so, Tomas."

"Excite myself?" As soon as she saw that Nora was there she turned quickly towards him. "Hush," she said, and went towards her bedroom, he following her. Nora heard him talking quickly and without a pause; she could hear Fru Rendalen as well, parrying his words, and at last tearfully justifying herself. At length he went away; long

afterwards Fru Rendalen came back, sad and sorrowful. "I have done a dreadfully foolish thing," said Nora shamefacedly.

Fru Rendalen made no reply; she continued to walk slowly up and down. It was more than she could bear alone, and Nora's evident sympathy tempted her.

"God knows, I believed it was one of the best acts of my life, and now I am told it is the worst." Tears bedewed her spectacles, and as usual she turned her attention to them as she sat down. Nora rose and came forward sympathetically. "But, dear Fru Rendalen." She knelt down beside her. The old lady wanted this friendliness, wanted some one to confide in, and so Nora learned that "Tomasine" was Tomas's sister. The girl had begun well, but from the time that she had gone to America she fell into bad ways, and was sent home again, out of her mind. Fru Rendalen had paid for her till her death. She had been entirely silent about it to her son—why need he know of it? But now he fell upon her with the most frightful accusations. The dead girl had had the same right in her father's fortune as he; the law on this subject was vile, no honourable person could abide by it. In the most violent words he had cast his sister's misfortune in Fru Rendalen's face. *She* was responsible for it.

Nora was dismayed. She had heard one or two things said since she had been up here, but this——!

Rendalen's manner during the time which followed frightened her, if possible, still more; she suffered almost as much as Fru Rendalen. He treated his mother distantly and coldly when he was obliged to be with her; as a rule he avoided her.

From the time he was a boy Tomas had at times felt her to be coarse-grained and wanting in refinement, as though he had no relationship with her. The feeling had always yielded to gratitude, and to the similarity in their views and purposes of life; and, whatever his feelings might be, he nourished a constant admiration for her strength and power of government. His ill-temper had always come suddenly, and passed away directly.

It was quite the contrary at a later time.

His mother did not understand all this, neither did Karl, but they realised that he was unhappy. He seemed to them to be in a growing state of self-torment, and in this they

were not mistaken. He would discover, with all the ingenuity of a *Kierkegaard*, that if *he* had never existed, his sister would have lived happily. She would have had the property then, and the hereditary tendency would not have grown into insanity; or he would picture his sister brought up there with him, with Augusta, and with the other girls, in the garden, in the school; all those strangers had admittance here, she only had not—his sister, his father's daughter. That his mother could with an easy conscience buy herself free from this imperative duty, and that with a few paltry daler a month; that she had never felt that more was demanded of her!—what a crime had been committed against the unfortunate girl, and she had never once comprehended this!

In the midst of it all came the incident of Tora. His mother *insisted* on speaking to him. The first time, as we know, she was interrupted; but when Tora was asleep she went in and confided it all to him. He perceived at once its bearing on the school, on her friends, and on himself, and fell into such a fury against Niels Fürst, whom he had not loved before, as can be best described by his own exclamation: "If I had him here I would beat him to a jelly with my own two hands."

Although Tomas had no outward resemblance to his father, he could look so like him that it made Fru Rendalen shudder.

This very fear gave her courage. For a whole year she had seen how his impatience, irritability, and quickness of temper increased. When she herself aroused it she did no more than justify herself, or perhaps go away; he had really cowed her by degrees.

But now another was in question. Tora's despair forced her on; it had, too, an alarming resemblance to what she saw before her. When, after another overpowering outburst, he was about to rush away, she placed herself before him.

"Tomas, you frighten the life out of me with your violence. You give way to it more and more; it will grow beyond you at last, my son."

He shuddered, and grew deadly white.

"Yes, excess is excess in whatever way it shows itself, and I think you ought to be on your guard."

Her voice trembled ; their eyes met and measured each other ; an unhappiness and bitterness had risen into his, which wounded her.

"What, Tomas, may I not so much as warn you—I, your own mother? No, do not look at me like that. It is not *my* fault. I have combated it as well as I could—yes, before you were born, Tomas, and I intend to combat it still. For the last year you have not struggled against your temper, and it is especially on me that you vent it."

He stood near the window, looking out. He turned now with a melancholy expression.

"What is it, Tomas? Tell me, in God's name, what it is?"

But he turned away again, and laid his head on his arm.

"I do not understand you, Tomas, you are so supercilious to me. You say there is something naturally blind about me, and I know it. Yes, you often humiliate me—often when I am alone, and that I can bear ; but often before others as well, and that you should not do. At all events, you ought to be able to bear having your faults pointed out to you by me."

She said the last words almost humbly ; they worked strongly upon him. He did not speak, but he turned and began to walk quickly up and down in visible agitation.

"If I could only understand what it is you are vexed with me for. It is not only what you rebuked me for—Yes, Tomas, you cannot bear to hear that word ; but I have had to endure more than words. It is not that alone ; there is something more under all this. What is it? Why do you never talk now, Tomas, either to me or Karl? You are unhappy ; do you think we have not noticed it? I would so joyfully do anything for you. Even if I am inferior to you——"

"I cannot endure to hear that word," he cried.

"No, no, but you never will condescend to speak to me, so I am compelled to think—no, I will not say that, but you see yourself what you are ; one must not so much as make use of a word before you, and you—— But I will be silent, I see that you are suffering, my son ; if only you would remember that I suffer as well. Great heavens! must I ask permission before I remind you that this has been going on for a year?

I have not the slightest idea what is the matter—not the slightest, Tomas, beyond what results from my want of ability. If there is anything that I can set right, only tell me—tell me, whatever it is. Can you not trust me?”

“Cannot you trust me?” he burst out, and threw himself down on the sofa, with his face in his hands.

And then it transpired that he thirsted for sympathy.

His was a warm, impulsive nature, which must have trust and affection if he were not to waste his whole life. The independence to which he had accustomed himself, and which had increased during his violent studies, his continual journeys, and by his different plans, had changed into a sense of deprivation—had been succeeded by the most terrible hunger when he was here in the midst of a daily recurring life, full of heartiness and devotion—devotion to one another, while he was always outside it. All his being yearned for what he saw. “Not the cursed littlenesses,” as he expressed himself; “no, only to have trust as the groundwork of everything—trust, and nothing but trust.”

They must just bear with him and take him as he was, *because they believed in him*. Otherwise, he should go to destruction.

Fru Rendalen sat there, she had taken his head on her lap; she listened and listened, her heart swelled, and she laid her spectacles aside, for they were no longer any use to her.

“He is right,” she thought; “oh, how right he is!” One image rose up in her mind after another; above all, the incident with the teachers. She had believed them at once, and to humour them had taken the school away from him, and from that time forward had in a manner controlled it. Till this moment she had lived in the blessed delusion that he was indifferent to this—nay, that it was a relief to him. And thus things began to dawn upon her which she might otherwise never have discovered. She did not understand this delicate, sensitive nature. If his repressed powers did not recover their strength, the fault would be hers.

“You mean about the teachers, Tomas?” she asked, and she could hardly control her voice. He took her hands and held them while he enumerated his grievances.

There were, oh, such a string of them, both great and small—some so small that she had never been conscious of



them. An answer, a word of advice in passing, a remark to some one else, even a silent look in response to something he had said. In her distress, the worthy Fru Rendalen asked his pardon with voice and gesture and tender embraces, declaring that hereafter if he said he wished to go to the moon, she would believe him. She had never worked herself up before to such decided exaggeration, so that Tomas was forced to smile. Her memory was awakened. She remembered clearly how it had all happened, and how she had first lost confidence in him. It had been after his famous lecture; he had taken her much farther with him on to "slippery ice" than she had really the courage to go, and she had only discovered this afterwards. That was the foundation of it all. His power of persuasion, his gift for talking people over, and something indescribable added to this, carried one away; that was undoubtedly what the teachers had felt. Now unfortunately it is the way with mankind, that as soon as we discover that any one has carried us farther than it suits us to go, we not only try to fight against it—that would be right enough—but we look ever afterwards with mistrust at what that person says. Fru Rendalen knew that at times she had done this, and had tried to correct it; but she had had no idea how often she had done so, and still less how often he had noticed it. She knew that she hurt herself when she did so, but till now it had never occurred to her that she had hurt him—he seemed so superior and so distant.

There was a real reconciliation. It was broken off, and taken up again during the next few days, whenever it was possible.

The immediate fate of the unfortunate Tora was decided at the same time, but this was but a small settlement compared to the great one which had been accomplished. A confidence was now opened between them which on his side poured out with overwhelming wealth. The long privation of a year satisfied itself in two days; he was so spontaneous, so tender, and so loyal in the smallest things, that she more than admired him, she adored him. If when she was wrapt in her own thoughts, he came unexpectedly upon her, she coloured; you could see by her face when she heard his step—she guessed everything he wanted, and *everything* he wished for was remarkable. If she saw that

he was in a good-humour, she sang—the worst thing she could have done, for no one ever yet discovered what it was she believed herself to be singing.

Nora would have felt unhappy if she had not as well been drawn into this great feast of reconciliation, which lasted from morning till evening, and from morning till evening again.

In the midst of all their joy, Tora's affairs, as has been said, were arranged. Tomas had soon come to a clear understanding of what should be done. The newspapers announced that Fürst had been ordered to Stockholm, and he offered to take Tora there at once. Fürst should be forced to marry her—not, of course, that she should live with such a scoundrel, but in order to give his name to her child and support to herself, so that she might learn to do something, and be able to care for her child. If Rendalen had to go to Fürst's superior officers—nay, to the King himself—he would answer for it that the wretch should do her justice. None of those in the secret, least of all Fru Rendalen, doubted for a moment. They were surrounded by an atmosphere of confidence and hope.

The unfortunate Tora had from the first felt the deepest aversion to Rendalen's plan; the ground on which she consented to yield was consideration for the school and her friends, that as little shame as possible might fall on them. They had forborne to mention this, but it forced itself upon them.

Only in one particular was Rendalen's plan altered—Fru Rendalen would go instead of her son; his presence might have produced the very opposite of what they wished.

Two days after this plan had been conceived—three days after the violent interruption to the lecture—Fru Rendalen and Tora set off.

On the afternoon of the last day Fru Rendalen had become suddenly very despondent. It was known that there had been some worry about money, but that was always happening; and, indeed, it had been set right, but, notwithstanding, the gloom did not disappear. Rendalen went to her and tried to find out what it was. She put him off with excuses once or twice, but when he held her fast she was obliged to blurt out that she could not tell him; it was another person's secret—"not Tora's," she hastened to add.

"Use your own eyes, and then you will not need to tempt me." He did use them, both on man and beast, but found it quite impossible to discover the cause of his mother's low spirits. She carried the secret away with her. He went round and asked everybody, but they were all equally obtuse.

It made some stir in the town that Fru Rendalen, at this time of year, and in the midst of the school work, should go to Stockholm; and that if she needed a companion she should have chosen Tora Holm, who was ill.

Tora Holm's mother announced with some pride that probably her daughter would not return, for if Stockholm seemed to be the best place, she would continue her studies there. Every one had heard that Tora's talents were more than ordinary, so this seemed quite reasonable.

Fru Rendalen had been up to speak to Sheriff Tue and his wife about Nora. According to her ideas, Nora was cut out for teaching and directing. She became less self-assertive, too, the more responsibility she had, and she had ceased to be capricious.

Fru Rendalen asked if Nora might not move over to "The Estate," and during her absence overlook the house and school, and take charge of the money and books. Afterwards she might help with them, and perhaps perfect herself in school subjects. Both parents gave their unqualified consent to this at once, they had precisely the same opinion of their daughter as Fru Rendalen. Her father added, smiling, that she seemed to have no notion of falling in love. "No," her mother observed gladly; "she has no inclination for marriage."

At the house and in the school, all thought it strange that the youngest teacher, a pupil a year ago, should be put over them; but it was certainly true that Nora displayed her best qualities—she was clear-headed, ready, and marvellously helpful.

She got on well with Rendalen, he seemed to find pleasure in conversing with her. "Conversing with" is not the right expression—he talked and she listened, but then he never did otherwise; he always went away when others joined in.

Although he was not quite thirty, he had by degrees acquired a number of curious ways, but each one was the

result of something in the development of his character. Had not his fashion of running away from any discussion had its origin in a series of sorrowful experiences?

He was making a noble struggle with the bursts of passion which certain things, certain names, always aroused. The result was that whenever he restrained himself, he choked as though he had swallowed something the wrong way ; and if it was very violent, he spat quickly two or three times through his closed lips—not actual spitting, at the most a sort of fine spray.

Tinka mimicked him incomparably. She made a face over little things as though she had taken too much mustard, for greater ones as though she had swallowed soft soap ; she would turn her head and give a cough like a cat, or if she pretended to spit, it was with an air of disdainful superiority. Very soon all the pupils followed her example—there was nothing they did better.

At the school, Tomas Rendalen was just what he had been when he first came home—all brightness and life, wonderfully careful in making all his explanations clear, and often quite fascinating in his manner.

It must be confessed that he proved a rod in pickle for the teachers, but there was no longer any misunderstanding him, though they were often on pins and needles when he began to interfere ; but it was only necessary to speak to him about it, and he became at once irresistibly charming ; this, however, did not prevent a recurrence.

His uneven treatment of the children, his way of treating any subject according to the temper of the moment, remained unfortunately the same, but it was done unconsciously ; and this fact, the absolute justice of his mind, and more than all the frankness with which he begged pardon when he had once been convinced that he was to blame, set things for the most part right again.

Miss Hall was obliged to confess that she had looked too hardly on this his incorrigible failing, as well as on several others ; for even his admirers had to allow that he was not perfect. For instance, in the face of several classes assembled for a lecture on physics, he would begin to carve a face on the laboratory table, which some chance had begun there, and shortly afterwards would rave like a Turk because a little girl had cut a tiny little name on her desk !

"Did she think that was what she came to school for? did she suppose her desk was made to be cut to pieces?"

Fru Rendalen sent word from Stockholm that Fürst was away, but was to return in a few days, they must therefore wait. She would employ the time in establishing Tora in some respectable family, and in collecting some requisites for the school. They had made the journey slowly, and notwithstanding the time of year it had done them both good, as did their stay in Stockholm. The letter was very hopeful, Tora improved every day. Rendalen was enchanted; any one who did not know him would have thought that he looked upon Tora's misfortunes as the greatest good luck. "Now you see," he called out cheerfully whenever he met any of those in the secret. What he meant by it was not very easy to understand.

But his certainty of victory and that of the others received a serious blow when the report spread about that Niels Fürst was engaged! and to whom? To "Your affectionate friend, your ever grateful Milla Engel."

The report came from Anton Dösen, Niels Fürst's greatest friend; he did not give it as more than a rumour, but he believed that it was certain. The families on both sides were diplomatic; they knew nothing about it.

The members of the Society were a sight to see when they met during this time! Above all, Tinka Hansen, when she solemnly opened the register and pointed to Milla's name! She could take her oath that every one looked upon Niels Fürst as thoroughly immoral. No one had been more severe than Milla; her mother's legacy made this only natural. No, this engagement was impossible! One could not think so badly of her. Such a thing would be disloyal, both to the living and to the dead. Milla's different letters to Nora from Paris were now read aloud again.

She and an American lady were living in a French family, who had had great losses, but who had aristocratic relations and acquaintances; she lived in a legitimist atmosphere, but it was not too severe. She had both the opportunity and the inclination to admire everything "fine," independent of religion and politics—everything fashionable, everything where talent and beauty were to be found. And she used her opportunity; "with my enthusiastic temperament, you know," wrote Milla.

She had begun as a loyal member of the Society, the obedient pupil of the school, and therefore gibed at the French spirit. But almost without warning she turned round: paintings, novels, and theatrical representations enchanted her; life, even when viewed from a distance, stimulated her.

It was evident that this was no real change of opinion; one heard the American's voice, though the writing was Milla's; but for this very reason it had not received the attention which it deserved.

Milla wrote that what they believed when they were together at school would not really do; her father had been right. In every letter she related something or another which was to prove this—not in the slightest degree in doubtful taste; on the contrary, with a delicacy which was not without its talent. "One must have no illusions," she wrote; "one will thus be least unhappy." Nora had replied, giving her opinion of it.

This all now received fresh importance. Was Milla's way of writing something more than the reflection of the life around her? Was it really a well-considered introduction to her engagement to Niels Fürst? Impossible! Nora was above thinking so ill of friends. She had given Tora her solemn promise not to tell anything to Milla; she now considered herself released from it, and wrote out of the fulness of her heart. Tinka wrote as well; she was full of the offence against Tora, and the report that it was to such a person that Tora's greatest friend had engaged herself—she whose name stood in the register!

Five days passed before they again received a letter from Fru Rendalen, and it was short and dry. Fürst had not yet returned. A short time afterwards they received a long and touching letter from Tora, and then several days passed without anything further from either of them. Ten days had gone by since Nora and Tinka had written to Milla—they would have sworn that she would have answered at once. She ought to have done so after such a piece of information and such a charge.

They became very nervous, especially when some one, who had taken no part in the affair, now remarked that, as soon as she had heard that Milla and Fürst were travelling together, she had thought "that would be a suitable match."

Of course, this was Anna Rogne : why had she not said anything ? " Because the others would have mistrusted it ; and," she added, smiling, " it would have been wrong." At last one afternoon, when Nora came in from the singing lesson, she found a sealed envelope on the table in the sitting-room. " Here it is," was written at the bottom in Rendalen's large handwriting. Nora suspected bad news, as he had not brought it to her at once. She had promised the others not to read it before they came, but one cannot keep those sort of promises.

Fru Rendalen had had her great conversation with Fürst. He had listened to all she told him with a cool politeness, as if he had been prepared for it, and when at last he had to answer, he began by saying that this was difficult, as their views differed so much as to the person in question. In his eyes Tora Holm was, in no small degree, a sensual woman, who could hardly restrain herself in the neighbourhood of a man. To the question if he were aware of the power which he possessed, he answered " Yes." It only, however, affected a certain description of woman, and Tora was precisely one of these. He was under no more obligation to marry her than any other with whom he had had an intrigue. He would provide for the child, and for her as well, with pleasure—that is to say, he would make a reasonable annual allowance.

Fru Rendalen threatened to bring the whole thing before his superiors, or even, if necessary, before the King.

" Pray do ; I can reach as far as you can, Frue."

She said to him that this would be a hard fight ; to which he answered that he knew how it should be conducted—he was not going to have his career spoilt by a lot of schemers. The lady in question was stamped in good society as a *femme entretenue*—it was shocking to wish to force her upon him as his wife.

He understood what it all meant : he was to offer himself up for the school, but he was not inclined to be so amiable. He knew what kind of lectures were given both in the girls' " Society " and elsewhere—what sort of conversations and readings they had had ; it was natural enough that sensual natures should be aroused by such things. He therefore considered that the school should bear the blame ; it would have a good deal of that sort of thing.

Fru Rendalen had a decided impression that something

had happened to annoy him, and that, before he came to her, he knew for what he would be called in question. The conversation had so agitated her that she became ill, which was the reason for her not writing sooner. She had not wished to mention her illness until she could say, at the same time, that she was starting the next day. This she could now do. She had not the courage to undertake anything more in this strange place, nor did she think it would be wise. As far as she could understand, publicity and open war were just what he wished for.

He was a dreadful man; they must all be on their guard. She had no doubt that this would bring their school into danger, and remain a great grief to Tora and her innocent friends. Tora was quite overcome. They both looked forward with dread to the parting to-morrow.

The letter closed with a lament that this warfare, which had arisen out of the school work, should never have an end. "Our enemies have gained a dangerous ally; we shall soon see if we have gained any as well."

Late that evening—Miss Hall, Tinka, and Anna Rogne had all read the letter, and were in the sitting-room with Nora—there arrived a telegram. They supposed that it was from Fru Rendalen to Tomas, and Nora had got up to ask one of the servants to take it to him, when Tinka called out that it was not for Rendalen, but for Nora herself. "For me?" asked Nora, and came forward. It was true, it was for her, from Milla. It ran: "*Frightful: report untrue.*"

A fortnight had passed since Nora and Tinka had written. Milla had therefore had the letters for ten days, and then sent—a telegram! What did it mean? While the others soon forgot it in Fru Rendalen's news, compared to which this last event was comparatively indifferent, Anna Rogne remained sitting with the telegram in her hand. She pondered over it.

The others began to ask themselves whether they also would now be mixed up in the Tora scandal. "War" might already be declared. If Niels Fürst had written to any one in the town and given *his* version, what would happen? A time might come when they would hardly dare, any one of them, to show themselves in the streets.

Anna Rogne interrupted them. "This telegram; ought it not to be taken in to Rendalen?" Yes, of course, and it



was done at once. They all expected that Rendalen would come to them directly, but they waited in vain ; on the contrary, they heard him a little time afterwards at the piano.

"Well, as Rendalen does not seem to pay any attention to this telegram either, perhaps I may be allowed to suggest what may have happened?" asked Anna, rather ceremoniously. The state of things she thought must be that Fürst and Milla really had been engaged, but that on the receipt of Nora's letter she had at once broken it off, with such an intimation as to make him understand the reason ; that was why he had been prepared to meet Fru Rendalen, that was why he wished for publicity and war. He can never win the day without it, and he must win ; a marriage with the richest girl in any of the coast towns is the condition for the success of his career. Just because Milla had been engaged to him she had been ashamed to write. She had reflected—tried as well, perhaps—until she had found a way out of the difficulty by telegraphing.

Anna ended by saying, "I suspect that Lieutenant Fürst is at this moment in Paris."

It may as well be said at once that Anna's position in regard to Milla was fateful for the latter. It influenced firstly those whom she was constantly among, later Fru Rendalen. Niels Fürst really was on the way to Paris, but if Milla's friends had sent on Fru Rendalen's letter to her she would hardly have received him ; and if they had asked Tora to write to Milla—as she at a later time, when it was necessary, wrote to them—he would never have been able to approach her either personally or by letter. Indeed, even as it was he did not do so. He had first to obtain help from home ; but he had taken that into consideration, he had not wasted his time.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### WAR.

THE day before Fru Rendalen's letter and Nora's telegram reached "The Estate," Anton Dösen had received a letter from Fürst. It had been well considered before it was

written, and evidently was intended to be read aloud or sent the round of the town. In his narration about Tora he laid great stress upon their meeting at Fru Gröndal's. He had only seen her once before, and only in passing; he had not the slightest idea that he should meet her there. She had been entertaining and pleasant, Fru Gröndal had said, until he came, when she became unnatural at once; she could not bear him to speak to Fru Gröndal, she hid herself, and let herself be sought for, and then took it into her head to go away. Of course he followed her, just to see what it was all about. As soon as he came near her on board the boat, she began to cry. She would not let him help her on shore; but all the same, she walked past his house every day, and peeped in to see if he were at home, and then went on to the wood or up to the "Groves"—alone. He recalled certain readings and lectures up at the school; it seemed to him that a girl who had come from an atmosphere so exciting to the senses, would be sure to conduct herself somewhat in that way. He thought that this was "magnetic influence" enough, no more was needed.

He would not deny that at last he had allowed himself to be tempted to follow her into the wood, where she amused herself by playing hide-and-seek with him. Little girls always begin in that way. But he asked if any man, with a regard for himself, would marry a girl who went past his windows every day to tempt him out into the woods. Fru Rendalen thought otherwise. She had come after him to Stockholm to arrange the marriage on the spot. It might have proved like her own.

For his part, he had far too high a conception of marriage to attempt to profane it in such a way. He had offered to support the girl, at all events as long as the child remained a burden, and he would acknowledge it as his. Honour and duty compelled him to go thus far, but further— That would be to patch a bad business with a still worse one.

To this every one to whom Dösen read the letter agreed. He read it in the shop, in the streets, at the club. Some people borrowed the letter from him, and although the paper had been carefully chosen, it was passed about so much that it became an illegible rag. Two copies had been made of it, one for Rendalen, at his request, and one—yes, Dösen hesitated a moment about this one, but after repeated

requests he could not refuse—for Tora Holm's mother. He obtained some enjoyment from this copy. Tora's mother was a violent, powerful woman, embittered in the struggle of life. She looked with doubt and scorn upon most circumstances. When angry she was regardless of consequences. One morning, in the middle of school time, she came up to "The Estate" in a heavy, shabby duffel cloak, a bonnet with bright-coloured feathers, and her bare hands in an old muff, with which she gesticulated while she cried and screamed. In the broadest Bergen accent she demanded her daughter—they must give her back her daughter; they had ruined her and stolen her. She was a good girl when she went there, but "up here, in the cursed old Kurt house, she had been ruined. Now, God forgive them for it, she was brought to shame, and made the talk of the town. She, her mother, had been stuffed with lies." But they should pay for it; they should be locked up. She would send the police after them. Her passion was uncontrollable, but her grief was real.

All fled far and wide, so she burst into one of the classes, which at once broke up, the teacher deserting her post. She contrived to break up three classes in this fashion: she made a tremendous turmoil. Some of the girls were so frightened that they rushed right up to the top attic, and stood there shivering, straining their ears and wondering if they dare go down. Some of the elder pupils, who remembered from stories that on such occasions you must show determination, remained behind, and tried to talk her into reason. But at this she became beside herself. This was evidently an example of the way in which they learned to be indecorous up here. It shocked her that "the children of worthy men" should justify such a thing. They had to run away as well, with their fingers in their ears.

But the little ones got the greatest amusement out of her. They surrounded her, and followed her about in triumph. The whole procession swept into the kitchen, where she began the same story. The occupants felt sorry for her, but they did not venture to say a word. So the whole train went off again along the hall, to Rendalen's door, which was fastened, then to Karl Vangen's, which was also fastened, back to Fru Rendalen's, which was open. In they went, she wanted to see if she could not find Rendalen.

Rendalen was in the town, and would not return for an hour. But Karl Vangen came in. He very gravely commanded silence, sent away the children, and took the poor mother into his own room. There she sat for at least an hour, and poured out her heart to him. It was a bewildered tirade, about Tora, about her husband who drank, about their poverty. At last she went away down the avenue, with a hundred kroner in her pocket, weeping quietly.

The school had all the appearance of a hen-house when some one has broken in upon its denizens. Has not every one seen such a sight? At first the hens fly with terrified cries against windows, walls, steps and roosting-places, till they become tired and confused, and can fly no more. Then they run about the floor with wilder cries than ever, knocking against dishes, troughs, one another. And when the danger is past, the commotion is not—they chatter, lament, scream all at once, in continual commotion. This goes on and increases, for whenever one of them is inclined to stop, some others are more persevering and will not. They recall all the remembrance of their affright, and the whole bevy starts off again worse than before.

Finally, they begin to plume themselves, to flap their wings, and set themselves straight, till at last things return to their original condition. But at the school things did not settle down during the whole day—some effects remained even longer, and threatened to become dangerous.

What spiteful pleasure was shown in the town, what victorious laughter was heard! Nothing else was talked of in the offices, on the quays, in the streets!

When a day or two later Fru Rendalen returned, the landing-place was crowded with people, mostly young men, who had come to meet her. It became known at the school on Saturday that she would arrive by the steamer on Sunday afternoon. No one could find a better use for his leisure time than to see how a great person returns from a defeat.

The scandal, which she had sought to cover by the journey, had now become as great as the journey had been long. When Rendalen came down with the carriage, he could not push his way through, but had to get some one to take charge of it while he tried to get past himself. Nora, Tinka,

Anna, and several other friends, who had talked of going down together, stopped when they saw the crowd; thus following the example of St. Peter of old, naturally with the difference demanded by modern days. Little Miss Hall alone defied these dangerous warlike preparations. She slipped along till she reached Rendalen's side, just as he was preparing to go on board. He was very nervous.

Fru Rendalen looked much worn, the glances which she hastily exchanged with Tomas and Miss Hall proved that she understood why the crowd was here, and that she did not feel safe among them. She held her son's arm very fast.

But respect for her—perhaps, now that they were face to face with her, a feeling of compassion also—prevented them from attempting anything. Way was made for them. Of course they could see by words and manner that this was no guard of honour, even some of their older acquaintances were there, such as the Town Bailiff and his wife. They hardly bowed; with the sternness of high morality they watched these evil-doers go by.

Those who had been standing nearest to the quay now made their way towards the carriage, followed by degrees by those whom the three had already passed. The carriage was quite surrounded when they got into it. In consequence of this they had to go slowly, step by step, once more through the crowd, which became more tiresome. They were hardly through before Rendalen whipped up. He was much incensed. At this moment he saw Anton Dösen, with a number of others, hurrying across towards them; they were flushed and had evidently just come from dinner. They all bowed with immense deference; either Dösen's bow was impolite, or it appeared so to Rendalen in his irritation. In an instant he pulled up the horses, threw back the reins to Miss Hall, was out of the carriage and up with Dösen, giving him a box on the ear which made him reel. He was back at the carriage, up and off again so quickly, that no one grasped what had happened before the carriage was rumbling over the cobble stones.

In the hall up at the house stood the three deserters, Tinka, Anna, and Nora. Miss Hall was the first up the steps, and with beaming eyes told them all that had hap-

pened; but Fru Rendalen found no pleasure in it. Rendalen, too, disappeared as soon as he had brought his mother up; it was long before he returned, and he was then in low spirits.

The conversation turned exclusively on the dark point in Tora's story, upon which she herself had laid but little stress, hardly ever mentioning it—the meeting at Fru Gröndal's. It had frustrated any attempt made in the town to lay the blame on Niels Fürst. Fru Gröndal had supported Fürst's assertions in the most minute particulars.

Tora Holm had been furiously in love with him, she returned to the town merely to get Fürst to accompany her.

Fru Rendalen could assure them that the only thing which Tora had been "furious" about was the confidential terms which Fru Gröndal and Fürst were upon. This had put her out all the more perhaps, because she was beginning to feel an interest in him. She understood this later. They all agreed to let Tora herself relate the circumstances. Tinka wrote to her the same evening.

Rendalen had joined them during this discussion, and now the events of the journey were related and all about Tora. Fru Rendalen was giving them her reading of Tora as she now knew her, and the others were deeply engrossed in it, when Karl Vangen interrupted them; he came in from church. The meeting between him and his adoptive mother was more than usually warm, she went into his room with him. She did not return.

The one whom Tora's misfortune had struck the hardest was Karl Vangen, but no one knew this except Fru Rendalen.

He had gone quietly on from day to day, the happiest man in the world. Whenever he met Tora she was evidently pleased, though he never ventured to construe this into a sign that she loved him—far from it; but *he* loved her, and thought that if Fru Rendalen would ever help him, the pliable Tora might be brought to share in some of his interests. If she came to do that, perhaps she might perceive his great affection for her; perhaps she might then feel that he would be able to do something to make her happy too. Fru Rendalen had often enough heard him talk to Tora and about Tora, but had suspected nothing till the morning when she told him what had happened. She saw

him change colour and remain silent instead of expressing sorrow or offering help ; but even then she was not certain, beside which she was much absorbed in her new relations with Tomas. Still she had a dim suspicion of the truth. But when the money which she had reckoned on for the journey could not be obtained, and Karl took her into his own room and offered her his savings and a small sum which he had inherited—then, as he looked into her eyes, she understood it all. He could not keep silence any longer, he held out his arms—— “Yes, that is how it is, mother.”

“MY DEAR NORA,

“I do not know what you can think of me for not writing, but your last letter so upset me on account of our dear Tora that I really did not know what to write. How at a loss, how helpless, one feels at such a time, dear Nora ! And, let me add at once, how ashamed. To think that such a thing could happen to any one with whom we have associated ! I shall never forget what my father said the first time he saw her. I was very angry at it then, we thought so highly of one another. Are you quite certain, dear Nora, that everything was exactly as Tora has said ? You know she was never very exact, and, especially in such a case, it seems to me that a person is almost obliged afterwards to put a different colour on it. Do you not think the same ? I will not repeat what I have heard, it may be a mistake too ; but you know yourself, dear Nora, that she never was particular. Do you remember that once or twice you had to check her when she was telling us stories. You see, she had been in France ; she knew a great deal more than we others. When I recall what she has told me at different times, I feel that it amounted to a great deal. May not some of this have affected her disposition ? Of course, I do not say this as a reproach, least of all could I do so now when she is unhappy, but perhaps this may explain a few things. I am terribly sorry for her, and you would do me a service if you could tell me any way in which I could be of use to her without offending or embarrassing her. I will not answer dear Tinka this time, give her my best love, and say that the expression in her last letter, ‘Tora’s greatest friend,’ is not a true one, at least from my side. It might have appeared so at one time, I do not deny it ; but that was quite and entirely

Tora's fault. Not that she forced herself upon me, it would be wrong to say so, but it was impossible, when in her society, not to go too far. I was obliged to make more of it than I wished, and this to the last hour of the last day.

"Do you know, I had not been three days alone before I began to have a feeling of dislike for her. Perhaps that was bad of me.

"Her influence over me lasted beyond the time when we parted. I did not understand that at once, but I have a proof lying before me—the letter you kindly returned to me; that one in which I hurriedly scribbled down something about my impressions of Sofiero. I shall keep it, that shall be my punishment. I have just read it through again. You unfortunately have read it also (a thing I shall never forgive myself for): could you conceive any letter of mine more unlike me?

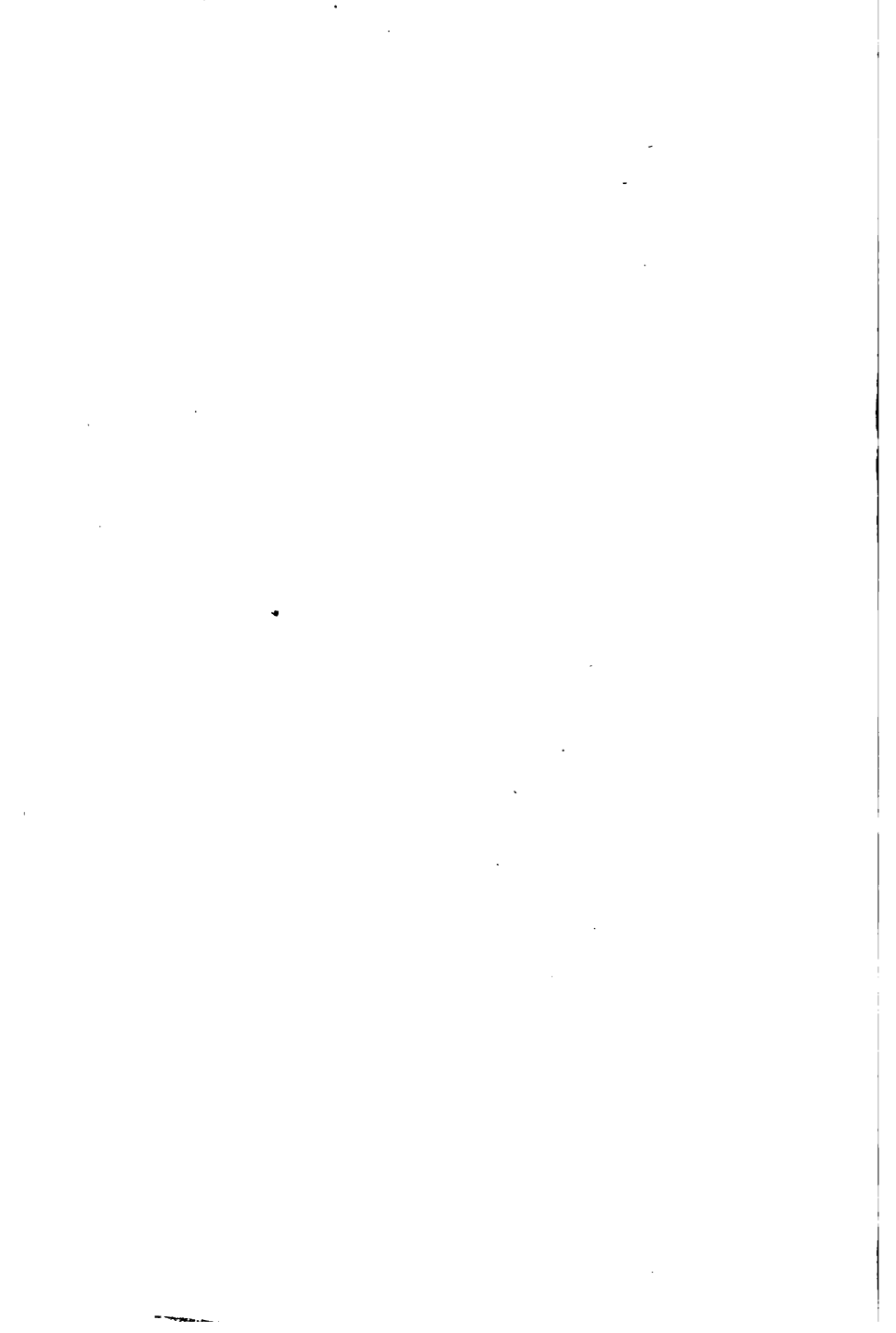
"I don't know why, but I see Tora through the whole thing. I can't explain it. I have never been able to write to her since. Here, where everything is more formal, and where there is no room for sentimental confidence, it offends the taste even to be reminded of such a thing. It would almost be like going out before one was *coiffée* and without one's dress. Perhaps I am too severe, the blame for being so must fall on the tone of conversation at home. I am so often reminded of that unfortunate girl by some Germans here; they are very like her, though she was the worst I have ever met.

"Yet how clever she was! I never have a new dress, or study a pattern, or indeed see any new fashion which interests me, without remembering her. Could she not become a milliner? If I could do anything to help her in that direction, it would be a pleasure to me, otherwise what is she to do? I really am dreadfully sorry for her.

"I have lots to tell you, I see something fresh nearly every day; but this affair of Tora has put me in such a *triste* state of mind that I do not feel inclined to begin anything more cheerful. Poor Tora! You must give her my love, but don't say anything about what I have written to you in confidence, it would wound her without doing good to any of us. Fate has raised a dividing wall between us, so there is no need. Give my love to Tinka, Fru Rendalen, and all who ask after your affectionate, and, in other respects, very happy,

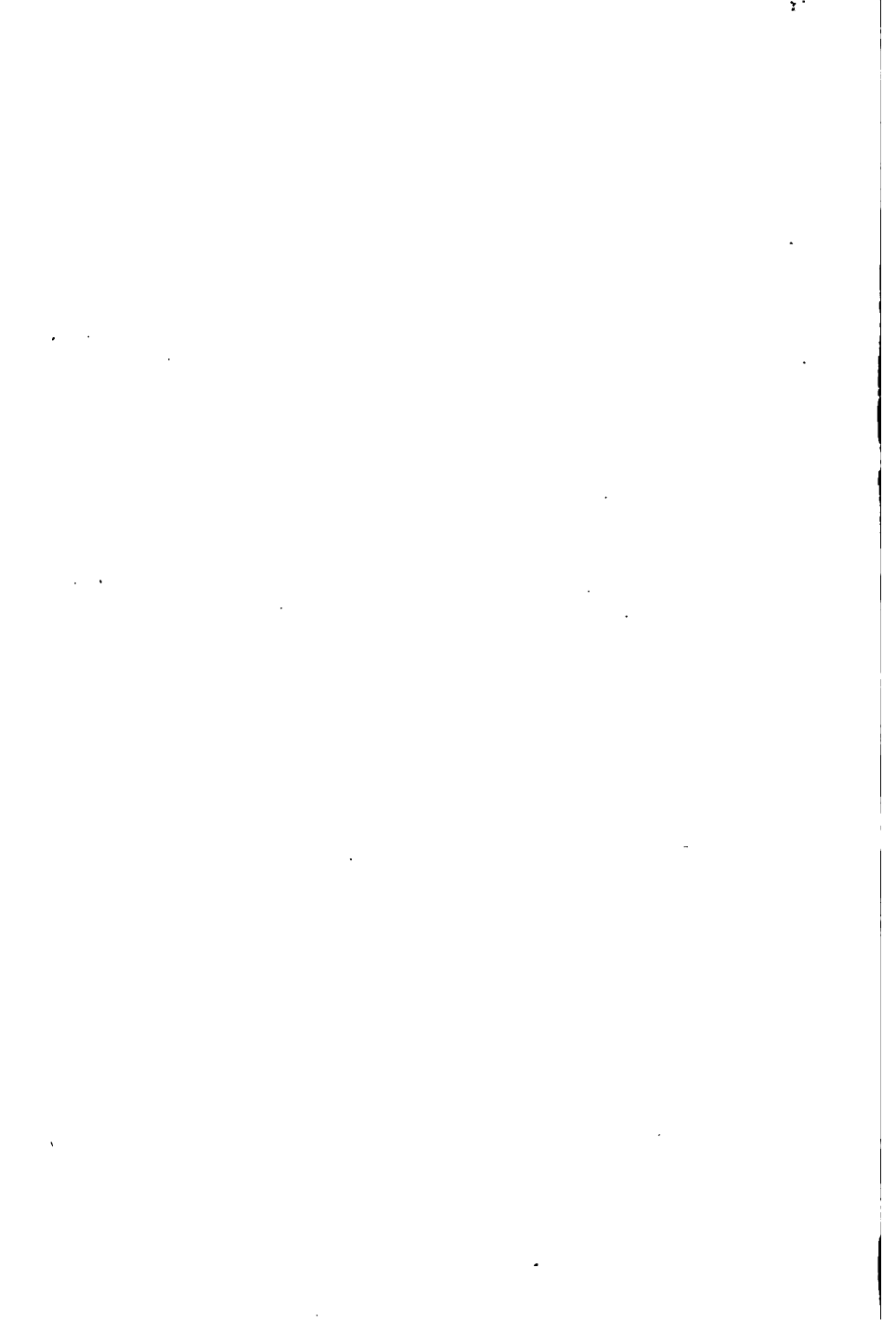
"MILLA ENGEL."





VII

THE FIGHT ITSELF



## CHAPTER I.

### IN BOTH CAMPS.

AFTER Milla's letter, Nora disappeared from the sitting-rooms—nay, for several days she was unable to go on with her work; she was quite overcome. First Tora in her way, now Milla in hers. It was too much for her. She had held the principal place in their mutual life, she had believed all they said, and made herself one with them.

Latterly she had endured mockery, not least from her father, ever since her presidentship had laid her open to ridicule; she had tried to bear this, but after Milla's letter she gave in. As we know, she had every now and then before this time felt her life shallow and superficial. But after this! Over and over again she reviewed the thoughts and actions of her companions since she had been here. She was confronted everywhere by lofty aims, but lamentable weakness when it came to deeds; not least in herself. They had all been easily raised to enthusiasm, yet were unutterably volatile, their heads full of nonsense, vanity and jealousy. In many, was an evil desire which befooled them under a thousand disguises. They were disfigured by the instinct, inherited through a thousand years, to submit themselves to the wishes of the stronger.

She would no longer be the leader of the Society. She could hardly resolve to remain a member of it. It did no good, and she had more than enough to do for herself, for she saw in herself natural gifts, but no stability.

"Genius with disorder," as her father called her mother. Just then the relations between her parents were not good. Nora clung to the school, absolutely hid herself there.

Christmas came; she was free and could have gone home,

but she begged to be allowed to stay. She was very lonely; Tinka was engrossed with Frederik Tygesen, who was at home for Christmas; the engagement was now almost openly acknowledged. Anna Rogne was studying philosophy with Rendalen, and was so learned and so happy that she did not at all suit her. Very often, when any one came in, Nora was sitting crying. She had a quick way of brushing away her tears; her hand moved across her eyes as though she were driving away a fly. Then she would smile cheerfully at whoever came—no matter who it was; the reason for her distress was evidently not in the house.

Nora down-hearted! Nora overcome! They all knew that that happened occasionally, but now it had continued so long. Of course she was asked about it, but she at once became so high and mighty that no one asked her a second time.

At last, just after Christmas, came the long-expected letter from Tora. Rendalen invited all her friends in the school to hear it. The beginning of the letter at once explained what they wished to know; it reminded them of something that they recalled at once, but had not up to this time understood; how Tora had been affected the first time that she and Fürst met, that morning up at the gymnasium, when she was excited and overdone; how he had walked slowly up, fixing his eyes upon hers and nailed her to the spot, till he stood by her side. The agitated style of the letter, the constant interpolations, re-writings, protestations, gave a striking image of Tora. If she had not always been careful, she was touchingly so now, perhaps just because she knew that, not without grounds, they might be doubtful about her in this particular. Anna Rogne read the letter aloud to them all; she knew it by heart, and delivered it in a rather precise, but even tone of voice; thus read, the letter touched them. Its many turns and additions came out oddly. The protestations shone out like sunlight through clouds—one laughed, and was moved at the same time.

During the reading, Rendalen sat looking at Nora. He had just heard that she would not continue to be the head of the "Society," and he felt that he must break through the restraint which he had put upon himself.

While the others were discussing the letter among them-

selves, he sat down near Nora, and talked long and eagerly with her—until some of the others noticed that she often passed her hand across her eyes. The conversation ceased; looks were turned towards them. Fru Rendalen proposed that they should have some music; she asked her son to play something. "With pleasure," he said, but remained sitting thoughtfully.

"What should you say to my first endeavouring to combat the depression which often overcomes a woman when her eyes are opened to her inheritance of frailty?"

Yes, they would all like to hear him.

He said he had been reminded that evening of how, more than a year ago, he had spoken at a meeting of the Society in a very desponding manner on heredity. This had really only arisen from a feeling of depression. His opinion of heredity was simply this, that one inherited quality combats another. One need not be so desponding. In the course of time all families are so mixed together that any legacy of evil (which one must strive to reduce to impotence) has almost always beside it a legacy of good which may be strengthened by use. That is to say, never be guided by chance, but let the teacher first, and ourselves afterwards, be watchful betimes.

He was so imbued with the subject that he was able, on the spot, to give a number of historical examples. He added others to them, gathered from his own and others' experience. The question had occupied him from his boyhood. In his own family there was a predisposition to insanity. Every case which he could trace showed plainly that only when the weakness which led to insanity had been allowed to increase, did this infirmity break out. When this weakness was opposed by the intermixture of fresh blood, by education and self-education, that person was saved for his work in life. Heredity was not a destiny, but a condition.

It was sometimes said that knowledge and surroundings were no help. But what did the letter tell us which had just been read? First, most distinctly, that Tora had an inherited weakness; next, that if Miss Hall had given her lecture four months sooner, Tora at any rate would have been saved. "So we may well say, 'Help one another,' by knowledge and fearless counsel. Woman has been condemned to isolation. Man has sought fellowship and knowledge. Only by fellow-

ship will women teach each other to fight for their own cause.

" 'The inward development,' is subject to crises, and then intercourse is burdensome; with this each one must deal as she can. But there is no doubt that we advance our inward development only by doing our duty."

That was all; but from it, and the conversation which succeeded it, was formed, from that evening, the strongest bond of union among all the women who, in the time that followed, supported the cause of the school in the town. From this evening also dated the influence of the "Society" over the school; all discords were subdued before they came to the teachers' ears. Even before this the members of the "Society" were accustomed to go into the different classes to help the more backward pupils before lessons began. This had given them an influence of which they made use. Again, from this evening dated—and in the long run this was the best of all—Rendalen's lectures in the chapel up on the mountain. Every Saturday evening he explained the laws of natural history, illustrating them with pictures and experiments; and every Sunday evening gave sketches of the history of civilisation, when pictures were also exhibited. Niels Hansen defrayed the preliminary expenses, and was always present. Rendalen had begun this partly to gain partisans. He would not "Hang in the wind." But when once he had begun, he became interested in the task which lay before him, and persuaded Miss Hall to lecture every Sunday, between three and four, to the women there. Miss Hall elected to speak alternately on the diseases of children and those of women. She had an immense audience, and this was greatly owing to the fact that the quick witted young lady at once declared that these diseases, both in women and children, had in no small degree the same origin—men's immoral lives.

But to return to this evening. There are times when human wills, with the projects they have formed, readily unite themselves as though there had never been doubt or separation—a harvest full of promise for a future seed-time. Such a time at "The Estate" was that evening of the twenty-ninth of December. The day was remembered, and often mentioned at a later time. They did not separate till past midnight, and the departing guests sang as they went down the avenue.

As Fru Rendalen was undressing she heard, to her astonishment, Tomas going out; she half opened the door.

"My dear boy, where are you going?"

"It is such splendid starlight."

Fru Rendalen could not be called romantic; she went to the window and peered out from behind the curtain; yes, it was starlight, quite so. There are so many things that a school-mistress has to think of, that there is no time left for the stars. Yet the tone in which he spoke of them! Tomas had not for some time seemed so happy as this evening. He had never before stayed with them the whole time, till past midnight! He really was beginning to take root, or was it through combativeness? He was terribly like the Kurts.

"Fru Rendalen?"

"Good gracious!"

"It is only I."

"Why, my dear Nora, are you not in bed? I am coming to the door. What! you are still dressed?"

"It is such lovely starlight."

"Tomas has gone out."

"Yes, I heard him. Oh, Fru Rendalen!"

"What is it, my dear? Excuse me, I am going to get into bed. That's it!"

"I am so happy."

"Are you? That's right; you were so unhappy a little while ago."

"All that Rendalen said——"

"Yes, he was capital this evening."

"Fru Rendalen, do you think I might thank him for it? Might I venture?"

"Why, of course! What do you mean, my dear?"

"I could not rest till I had written——"

"Written? When you live in the same house——"

"I thought I would get it sent to him this evening."

"To-night, you mean; you can wait just as well till to-morrow, my dear, and then you can say it to him. You know Tomas is peculiar."

"But this evening he is in a good humour, eh?"

"You want to take a letter into his room?"

"Oh, no; not I myself. Fancy if Pastor Vangen were to come, or Rendalen himself!"



"Would you like me to?"

"Dear Fru Rendalen!"

"Get me my spectacles, and let me see."

"Here they are"

Fru Rendalen read:

"HERR RENDALEN,

"I cannot go to bed without thanking you. I did not want you to think I did not wish to do so. I did not find an opportunity for it. Thank you.

"Most humbly,

"NORA TUE."

Fru Rendalen's bed creaked; she got up.

"I will put it on his table by the candle. Have you the envelope? There, that's all right. Have you directed it?"

"Yes."

"Just give me my skirt and slippers—that's it. It was pretty of you, Nora. Yes, he was very good this evening: that's it;" and she trotted off.

As she again got into bed she said: "But, Nora, why did you not thank him at once?"

Instead of answering, Nora put her head down to Fru Rendalen, kissed her a good-night, and went lightly off. She turned back. "Shall I put out your candle?"

"No; good-night, my dear."

The winter passed by, and they began to hope that the war might pass off as well, as it had done before.

But when minds are excited they require but little to aid them. The political strife was now at its height; the so-called people's party had started a newspaper; the *Spectator* seemed to them to have attained the measure of iniquity. Between this paper and the new one, the *Independence*, a fierce antagonism quickly arose, which became most trying to the nerves.

In the spring, on Rendalen's birthday, the "Society" hit upon the unlucky idea of having a large flag-staff set up on the tower, from which waved, on the great day, an enormous Norwegian flag without the "Union." The girls had never thought about the old quarrel over the flag, but

Rendalen had shown the whole school pictures of the flags of all nations, and explained to them that, from old times, the Union was only used by States which were incorporated one in the other, such as Scotland and Ireland with England, or the United States of America, and this was what the world understood by a Union, notwithstanding the differing colours of the two flags. "Thus a Union gave us, the smaller country, the appearance of having been incorporated into Sweden."

This flag was looked upon as a demonstration ; it was "bringing politics into the school." Rendalen forbade its being again hoisted ; he wished to avoid new quarrels. But this was of no avail ; angry spirits were roused ; all the old accusations were gone over again in the columns of the *Spectator* and at the club. The Town Bailiff suddenly came forward with a gift of five thousand kroner to found a new school without politics, with unbiassed instruction, without a method which was antagonistic to morality. The donor, he said, wished the gift to be anonymous. He had been most decided on that point.

The Town Bailiff and his wife each added one thousand kroner. It was he who had before proposed that a new school should be started ; now he came prominently forward ; he had been scandalised. The anonymous gift was precisely the same sum as that given by Fru Engel. Was Consul Engel the donor ? Several amounts were subscribed on the spot, but they were not large.

Tomas Rendalen at once put himself up for the club, as did several of his friends, Karl Vangen and Niels Hansen among them. All these were elected at a very full meeting, Niels Hansen, however, with only a small majority ; the club was partly built on his ground, and it was thanks to this that he was elected at all. Rendalen's election, on the contrary, was left open. It is true that the rules declared that every admission should be decided at the first meeting, but happily there were a number of lawyers present, and this rule was so construed that it was decided that *first* really meant *next*.

The next meeting was largely attended. The Town Bailiff opened it with the astounding declaration that Rendalen must be kept out, for "peace" sake.

A number of men had been sent to this meeting by their

respective wives to vote for Rendalen, and one of these obedient husbands made the mild remark that "peace" had already been disturbed by the Town Bailiff's proposal. The last-named gentleman became so exasperated at this that he would not continue, and Consul Engel's solicitor, the best speaker in the town, found it necessary to come to his assistance. His name was Bugge, and he was extremely eloquent. Several solicitors followed him, and all talked more or less about peace, morals, and Christianity—subjects which they, at all events, knew by *hearsay*.

Karl Vangen asked what on earth these great questions had to do with the matter in hand, whether Rendalen should, or should not, be a member of a social club? But Karl Vangen had hardly stood up before the Town Bailiff pulled a long list out of his pocket. He asked if he might put some questions to Pastor Vangen?

"With pleasure."

"First question—Is it true that Herr Rendalen has said that history cannot well be taught to people who believe that the world began as Paradise and its inhabitants as perfect beings?"

Breathless silence. Karl Vangen began a little hesitatingly : "Yes, that is true, but——"

"I beg your pardon, but I have the word," interrupted the Town Bailiff.

"No," observed one of the "husbands"; "Pastor Vangen undoubtedly has the word. It was he who was interrogated."

Hereon there was a great uproar; the real men were, Heaven be praised, in the majority; the "husbands" had by no means such strong throats.

"Second question—Is it true that Rendalen has said——"

"But dear me!" called out Niels Hansen; "is Rendalen to join the club to be confirmed?"

A roar of laughter followed. The whole room, without distinction of parties, gave way to immense merriment. The Town Bailiff paused. As soon as peace was restored, he began again. "Second question—Is it true——" The laughter began again, worse than before. The Town Bailiff stopped abruptly, and left the room; Karl Vangen now began. His friend Rendalen was of the opinion that history lessons ought conscientiously to describe all movements just as they were, and therefore the development of

Christianity as well; but to describe the life of mankind as a work of God's dispensation belongs to Church history.

"Is he not a Christian, then?" asked Bugge.

"We have nothing to do with that here," called out Niels Hansen.

"Is he not a Christian?" repeated Bugge.

"No, he is not a Christian," answered Vangen, colouring like a little boy.

"The blockhead," muttered Niels Hansen, and he left too.

"Then he has deceived us," shouted Bugge.

"He should have said that from the first," observed another.

Several shouted at once. There was disturbance, noise, delight. All the "husbands" were frightened, and held their tongues.

A quiet, well-to-do man stood up: "Yes, I could almost have guessed that Rendalen was not a Christian. Women to take the same position as men, that is against Christianity."

Pastor Vangen then again came forward, and he now spoke warmly. Rendalen's actions had been perfectly honourable. So long as Christianity supports mankind's moral consciousness, every school director should see that it was given to the children, as truly and heartily as possible. And it was thus that Rendalen had acted. It was only to be lamented that his instrument was so feeble, for that instrument was himself. But he could assure the meeting that he had full opportunity of doing all of which he was capable.

This made a good impression, and for a moment it seemed as though the discussion would end there. But the man who had spoken before, again rose; it was evident that it was a serious matter with him. "If Tomas Rendalen had said this when he gave a lecture up at the gymnasium two years ago—if he had said, 'I am not a Christian'—there would have been no school."

At the moment Karl Vangen could not think of any reply to this; it almost seemed to him to be true. The voting began immediately, and Rendalen was refused admittance by an overwhelming majority.

"Not," as Bugge observed, "because Rendalen did not believe, for they were tolerant there, but because he had not behaved honourably."

As soon as he could do so, Rendalen gathered his friends, and any others who liked to join them, at a meeting at the

gymnasium. It was a very full one. This was a fight which every one understood, and in which most of them took an interest. As well as this, the special woman-question was far more opened up than it had been two years ago; Rendalen was able to speak quite freely. He began by declaring that religion had been made use of as a "last resort." He had been expecting it for a long time. The audience was given an amusing description of the moral and Christian responsibility of the club, enveloped in clouds of tobacco smoke round the card-tables and punch-bowls, and of the virtue of the men, which consisted in a strong demand for virtue—in women, which was an advantage for themselves.

A work to obtain equality between men and women could not be called "Enmity to Christianity." Therefore notorious interpolations of Judaism into Christianity ought not to be sanctioned. If this were done, and the views of woman's position two thousand years ago in Judea were sanctioned—well, in that case, he could tell the Christians that they did not thus destroy the claims of the present day, but themselves. There was no help which he desired so much as that of serious Christians. He considered, too, that the Christian who had no reactionary aims must range himself here with the great French pastor, Pressensé.

As a teacher of history, he had himself endeavoured to point out trustworthily the works of Christianity. As a teacher of natural science, on the contrary, he could not disguise the fact that divers new discoveries were in opposition to the Jewish traditions; an honest teacher of natural science in most Christian schools must find himself in the same case. But the principal dogmas—the belief in God and salvation through Christ—remain unmoved.

The Christian beliefs of the school were unfettered, and directed by a clergyman, whom they all highly respected. He was clearly in his rights when he demanded that his private beliefs should be left out of the question. Indeed, it was his duty to demand this where the question was notoriously merely introduced for the sake of making confusion.

This time the current of opinion against the school was divided by a brisk counter-current. It was a good sign that Miss Hall's public lectures at the school were still well attended.

But what would Rendalen, or his eager opponents, have said, if they had known that the whole movement, from the moment the flag was hoisted, had been directed from outside? That the best contributions to the *Spectator* had never once been written in the town? That the Town Bailiff was a tool in a light but skilful hand? That the five thousand kroner which had so animated his faculties and morality, and those of his wife, had not come from Consul Engel at all? What would the Town Bailiff, what would lawyer Bugge and his colleagues have said, if they had known that the famous anonymous donor, who had called forth their eloquence, was a rascal who had carefully reckoned on the certainty of these men behaving as they had done, if they believed Consul Engel to be the donor? What would all these worthy men and women, who were fighting for morality and Christianity—what would they have said if they had known that at Stockholm there was a man who reckoned on their zeal and strong prejudices, as well as on the cringing and shrewdness of others, with the same sense of superiority with which we use the wide powers of Nature for the accomplishment of our own ends. But the force of opposition could not be accurately measured from a distance; where women are concerned, it is never easy to calculate; notwithstanding these great exertions, the amount subscribed was small, very, very small.

A mine must therefore be laid, and some of this opposition blown up. And this was done. The report of Niels Fürst's engagement to Milla Engel had died out; it was now renewed, and, with it, the exasperation of the whole woman's party. Angry, scornful remarks were flung over the whole town from Rendalen's circle; they stabbed and wounded both the families, Fürst's and Engel's. Consul Engel was especially offended by Rendalen having said, "All the Consul's mistresses ought to attend on the wedding-day as bridesmaids." Engel gave Rendalen to understand that till then he had held himself aloof from the business. Now, if the wedding took place, the new school should be remembered both as regarded a house and funds.

The person who brought this information to Rendalen received out of hand for answer: "Yes, it is wise of the Consul to put *if* before it, for there is not a church in the town in which Milla Engel will dare to be married to Niels

Fürst." This was really going too far; other people saw this beside the Consul. He now felt himself compelled to act.

The fact was that Milla had not engaged herself again to Niels Fürst—the report was untrue, a mere trick. Up to this time the Consul had not mixed himself in the matter; in such affairs one must be circumspect. He had contented himself by sending her cuttings from the *Spectator*, small reports, stories, and so on. He had also asked others to write; she no longer corresponded with any one at "The Estate." Now, however, the Consul wrote to her himself. He was so fortunate as to be able to send her a cutting from a Lutheran weekly paper, in which a highly esteemed clergyman analysed the proposition that women have the same right to demand chastity from men, as men have from women: the decided logical result of his analysis being that the proposition was unchristian.

"And now," wrote her father, "what further objection can there be? You love Niels Fürst? If there is any condition which you wish to make in regard to your marriage, name it, my child. The consideration which you and I possess demands that you should be married in accordance with our position in your native town."

Milla complied. If her dear mother's favourite clergyman, old Dean Green, who had carried her mother's gift to the school, would perform the ceremony, he *himself*, her father, might fix the wedding-day at once. So old Green, the most respected man in the town, was to give his countenance to their side? The Consul felt that this was highly improbable. He wrote to Niels Fürst, that now he had but little hope.

Fürst was not of the same opinion. Most old people incline towards compromise. He gave some instructions to his brother-in-law, and, after the latter had paid a visit to the Dean, Fürst wrote to the Consul that, after all, things might be more hopeful than he had imagined. The Consul was off at once. It may well be that he was astonished when the old man said decidedly that the attacks on the school ought now to end. A peculiar smile passed over the Consul's face as he lamented that he did not possess sufficient influence. The old man met smile with smile; there was no need for influence, he believed. And thus the matter rested.

It was on a Friday morning that printed invitations were sent out to Consul Engel's friends, in this and the neighbouring towns, asking them to honour him by their presence at his daughter's marriage with Lieutenant Niels Fürst.

The wedding was fixed for the following Monday week, at four o'clock in the afternoon, at the Cross Church. It was being hurried on.

To a few of his oldest friends the Consul added in writing that the spiritual guide of his family, his beloved wife's friend, Dean Green, would do the young people the honour of uniting them.

On the same day, about dinner-time, the Consul walked along the quays just as all the business men were coming to, or from, them. Every one greeted him with beaming faces and with great cordiality, and those who were sufficiently intimate pressed his hand laughingly.

Every one had been annoyed that Rendalen should wish to prescribe who was or was not to marry—precisely like Max Kurt in the old days—he, a miserable fellow, crippled with debts, with a great school which might tumble about his ears any day. The news of the wedding, and that Dean Green was to perform the ceremony, was carried by Saturday's steamers up and down the coast; it sprang ashore on the islands, was heard at the watering-places, and slipped away through the woods far inland. It brought excitement everywhere. One party rejoiced; the other was immensely scandalised. But there was not a woman in either party who did not declare that she should go to the town for the day to see it all. The children begged to go too. Mimic weddings took place in the "Groves" and about on the rocks, where an old Dean Green, in a short frock and with bare arms, intoned the service over the bridal pair in a trembling voice.

Somewhat more laggardly the news came that the donor of the five thousand kroner to the new school had withdrawn his gift; that Consul Engel had condemned all the uproar about the school; if it were carried further, he would be obliged to support the recipients of his wife's legacy: her memory demanded no less of him.

Had a compromise been effected? Was Milla to return home as the Angel of Peace?

Some people were incensed; some laughed; some few,



including the Town Bailiff, would not give in ; but how could a new school be started without Consul Engel ? And when in cold blood the advantages were considered, who did not at last wish for peace ? The daughter of the school's benefactress married to Niels Fürst—that was in itself victory, and that sufficed. One or two marriages of this sort, especially amongst the most advanced pupils at the school, and the good old constitution, the good old distribution of virtue and authority between the sexes, would remain unshaken. Rendalen, the Society, and Miss Hall might stick to their views if they liked. Tora was never mentioned now.

Milla was to be married on a Monday, and to leave the same night ; she was to arrive the evening of the previous Friday ; she would not be three days in the town ! That did not imply a vast amount of courage, her quondam friends considered. Not one of them went down to the landing-place to meet her. But there was no need for them, for, notwithstanding a drenching rain, it was densely crowded. The wedding for which she was returning, even if nothing special had happened previously, would have been the most important that any one could remember. The bridegroom, aided by the unusually large fortune which he would command, would be able to enter upon a career at Court which would lead to the highest positions in the country. Every one who knew him described him as a "born politician" ; not very flattering to politicians, but that I cannot help.

The bride was a beauty capable of becoming a thorough woman of the world. Besides, she was to remain so short a time at home, that every one must secure a glimpse of her.

Flags were hoisted everywhere, but they drooped along the masts in quite a shamefaced manner, mere patches of colour—the beautiful green-clad mountains at the head of the bay were shrouded in fog. Houses, gardens, sea, seemed to lie in a casket whose cover was the grey woolly mist.

The house-roofs were no longer red-brown, but black ; the houses not white, but ashen grey ; not yellow, but a sooty colour ; all the tints were subdued by several shades, the houses themselves seemed to crowd closer together, and appeared wonderfully small and crooked to the girl fresh from Paris, who stood, in the rain, on the deck of the steamer

which was gliding in among the islands. Only the great building up at "The Estate" and the formal stone walls by the side of the avenue loomed out from their encircling trees; but the red bricks looked dark and ominous, the window-frames a pitchy black, the dumpy frowning tower seemed to stand on the watch; as they drew nearer a huge white flag-staff could be seen on it without a flag. "The Estate" lay hemmed in, wide and menacing. Milla's glances wandered down from it towards the Cross Church with its slender spire, from which the joyful soul of Max Kurt had ascended to heaven; not that Milla thought of this, but under that spire she would, notwithstanding . . . . But, good Heavens, what is that? all that moving mass of black on the landing-place up to the very walls of the houses? Umbrellas? Absolutely nothing but umbrellas! What could that mean? From all the information which had been sent to her, and perhaps even more from what had not, she was quite convinced that if things were not all that she could wish, yet still there was peace here now, and no danger. Dean Green's authority protected her, and she herself did not wish to do any one an injury. But at the sight of all these people, a remembrance rushed to her mind of the way in which poor Fru Rendalen had been received, when she had returned from her journey with Tora. Milla turned deadly white; a fearful dread seized her. Although she struggled against it with all her might, she could not help trembling; her knees trembled so that her whole body shook; she had to support herself, to sit down. In the short space of five minutes she went through more—ah! more than when her mother died, for then a comforter hovered over her; the gloom was lightened by the hope of a future meeting. Now she felt separated, cut off, plunged into an abyss!

A sound of pitiless laughter surrounded her; people were trying to grasp her hands—where could she creep to?

Her father was on board, but at the moment was down below collecting the luggage and paying the steward. He heard the vessel swing noisily in towards the quay, and then cheers from hundreds of voices, repeated again and again. He came on deck, and his daughter rushed towards him, seized him, pressed herself against him, her lips quivering, and trembling in every limb. She who was ordinarily so self-contained, was in a state of nervous excitement.

"Why, Milla? They are calling out 'Hurrah for the bride!'"

"Hold me," she whispered. "Let me collect myself, I did not know, I thought——" And she cried—ah, how she cried!

Happily there was some obstruction at the quay, and a little time elapsed before they were alongside. The captain stormed; as Milla listened, the strain relaxed; so that when she stepped on shore, leaning on her father's arm, though still pale and trembling slightly, she could smile from under her coquettish hat as she passed in her charming travelling dress. Tears were becoming to her.

What ringing cheers for the bride, for Consul Engel! The crowd was almost all composed of men, and there was no one whom she knew well; but, yes, there are Fürst's sister and Fru Gröndal and Wingaard, and several others. There are flowers and welcomes, friends pressing forward, and cheer upon cheer, and more welcomes—nothing but homage and delighted greetings. More flowers still. The carriage was almost full! She took her seat in it—the same carriage in which thirteen or fourteen months ago she had driven here with Tora. She had no time to recall it. This was splendid, perfect!

At a little past two the next morning a *skyss kærre*\* drove slowly up the avenue to the school. A closely veiled lady sat in it with a child in her arms. She was expected, for Rendalen came down at once to meet her, and take her up the steps, at the top of which stood Fru Rendalen. It was a touching meeting.

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## CHAPTER II.

### A GALA DAY IN TOWN AND HARBOUR.

BETWEEN three and four o'clock in the afternoon, two unlucky printer's devils trudged off, each on his own beat, with the *Spectator*. They threw it into the passages, left it on the steps, pushed it under the gates. They must hurry on! The church was full long ago; by this time the market-place was packed from one end to the other.

\* Hired posting carriage.

When the worthy burghers returned home and found the *Spectator*, they read the following:—"As we go to press our town presents a most festal appearance. Naval Lieutenant Niels Fürst and Fröken Emilie Engel, members of two of the oldest and most respected families in the town, are to-day to be united at four o'clock, in the Cross Church, by our venerable Dean. From the country, where all the families who have the means are now enjoying their summer holiday, there has been an immense influx of people to witness the ceremony. As well as this, our streets are filled by a considerable number of strangers. It is understood that Consul Engel has received the good wishes of his Majesty, through the High Chamberlain of the Norwegian Court. Consul Engel, on the occasion of this happy event in his family, has presented to the Maternity Hospital the interest of a bequest of ten thousand kroner. The poor of the town will to-day be entertained by the Consul at the poorhouse. Further, we have just received the announcement that, in response to a special appeal, Consul Engel has given two thousand kroner for the thorough restoration of the magnificent organ in the Cross Church. A gala day in town and harbour!"

At midday a refreshing breeze had fanned the glowing streets; now only a capricious puff stirred the flags, and each time they blew out they formed a mass of colour over the town, and the whole length of the harbour; several ships were covered with flags from deck to masthead. A barque, the most gaily decorated of all, is hauled out to fire a salute, to begin the moment that the pair are united, and to continue until the bride's carriage draws up before Engel's house. Another salute is to be fired during the dinner.

The most perfect weather, over mountain and hill and sea and town! How cheerful the town looked in the sunshine! The small blocks of houses with their provincial decorations, surrounded by the pavement of cobble-stones, cleanly swept and warmed by the sunshine.

The shadows were very heavy; when any quiet pedestrian emerged from them into the white glare of the street, he had the same feeling as in old times the wick of a tallow candle must have had when it escaped from the snuffers again. The cats dozed in the sunshine, but with one eye open, for there were a hundred idlers about to-day. The gutters,

generally the route for many a toy-boat, were now dry; the newspaper boys jumped backwards and forwards across them, as they went from one empty house to another. Everything was clean and charming and quiet. Only in the streets by the quays the smell of decayed wood, salt herrings, train oil, and "such like," prevailed. There was work going on there too; festival at the masthead, toil on deck and down below. In the rest of the town most work was over by three o'clock.

A train of young people could be seen trudging down from "the mountain" towards the market-place, succeeded by groups of women, both old and young. They knew a little about the two families which were to be united, those good people on the mountain!

What a glorious day! The land breeze now and again sent "cat's-paws" across the harbour, which lost themselves in the blue grey water out by the islands. The open sea beyond lay wide and peaceful.

And how lovely were the wood-clothed mountains and hillsides, in the full colours of both pines and leafy trees, with the grass below ready for its second mowing. The greens were deeper than those of spring and with less variety. On the road below the churchyard was a long train of pedestrians; those country folk who lived nearest the town, toiled in just at the last to get a glimpse of the show—the men in front, the women following. A fussy little steamer shoots out from among the islands, snorting and puffing—she is behind time; she is bringing people from the nearest town, and has a horn quartet on board.

In the sunshine, the mountain seemed to those approaching it from the sea, to rear itself from the water like an ant-hill, but the resemblance was spoiled as one came nearer, although its small houses still looked like linen and stockings put out to dry. Close by, it became a curious breeding place for human sea-birds. All the children of the upper classes in the town looked at it with the greatest envy, especially on a day like this, for the flags excited their imagination.

Every now and then, heads were turned towards "The Estate." Every pane of glass in the great red brick building shone in the sunlight, but no flag was hoisted. As late as half-past three, Consul Engel, smoking a cigar, went up to

the top attic, to see if the flag were hoisted ; Emilie was just coming down the attic stairs ; she was fully dressed, except that she still wore her *peignoir*. She coloured when she met her father.

“What are you doing up here, my child ?”

“I was looking——” She slipped past him without saying for what. No flag on the tower ! The Consul remained there smoking. If there had been a flag without the “Union” to-day, it would have been most suitable.

From the time that it was reported that Tora Holm was at “The Estate” with her child, which report was heard early as Monday morning, an avalanche hung on the mountain ready to overwhelm them. This was the cause of all the Consul’s generosity ; if any one but asked for more, he gave it.

He had had two sleepless nights ! Was it true that Rendalen had sent a letter to the old Dean couched in most respectful terms, but in which he said that if this were “peace,” it was once more shown that peace belonged to Satan, but that the fight was God’s ?

“What did they contemplate—a scandal ?” the whole town was asking.

Tora’s appearance with her child just now was in itself a sentence—she must have an undaunted conscience ; something would certainly happen.

There was no answer to this fact : Tora Holm had dared to come here ; Rendalen and Fru Rendalen believed in her—all her friends believed in her.

All the incidents of Niels Fürst’s bachelor life were recalled—that is to say, those which related to *that* part of the country ; as a general thing, people would say what a devil of a fellow Niels Fürst was, and stroll away laughing. The laughter ceased now. In Tora’s neighbourhood such stories took a different complexion. Some of them seemed absolutely repulsive.

And the father-in-law ! His past also was brought up again. None of the stories dealt with daring seductions, unexpected, astounding conquests ; no open scandal—Heaven forbid ! but certain quiet intrigues were known of, often one or two at a time.

Expensive presents and small annuities had been heard of as well. They knew of children who passed for his, and

who were his living image. It all came up again now; even "indiscretions" of twenty years ago, and more, were recalled. Such little provincial towns have pitiless memories.

It had been but a short time previously that every one rejoiced that Fru Engel's gift had been opposed by a similar one, so that the "indecent" up at the school might come to an end. Now, as the women flocked into the town (which they began to do as early as Sunday), and the juniors at once hurried up to "The Estate," or collected in groups in the streets, a remembrance of Fru Engel's beautiful funeral filled the minds of all. What the daughter was about to accomplish was, in reality, disrespectful to her mother's memory.

Emilie herself was the only one who did not know that Tora was there. Fürst had arrived on Saturday morning, and had heard it at once, but he and her father believed that Tora had come to force herself upon Milla; they kept most careful watch that neither Tora herself, nor a letter or message, or indeed any sign from her, could come without being intercepted. The friends of the house had received their instructions, and beside they consisted entirely of members of the two families. The bridesmaids arrived in the town on Sunday—they were relatives, and, with hardly an exception, from a distance.

Milla knew nothing except that the other party had been defeated and ruined, there would be nothing now but peace. Her father had the firm intention of helping the school; it would work well enough if some of the ideas were abandoned. Milla felt especially grateful for this promise of her father. Why should not they all be friends together? "That is what we shall be," Fürst had assured her. The school party had made peace: old Dean Green was a proof of it. "Yes, old Dean Green was a proof of it," repeated Milla to herself, whenever she felt any doubt.

On Sunday she went to church and heard him, it did her so much good; and in the afternoon she went with her father to call on him. How kind he was! He exhorted her to be patient; we cannot alter the world, but we can set a good example; that was what her mother had done. Milla was deeply touched. "Ah! if only every one were good!"

Her father had never been so loving to her as now. His increasing kindness reminded her of the time when her mother was ill, and then the great amount of his charity; he could not have done her honour in a more delicate or beautiful way. Fürst was always amusing, and his way of being so was so very superior. He told stories of the Court, and terribly malicious ones they were; Fürst was so pleasant and clever. Milla felt that she was really fortunate—that is to say, except for a slight sense of want, a tiny sensation of mistrust—just so much as to oblige her, at the last moment, to go up to the top attic, to see if there were a flag on the tower. But there was nothing. Perhaps no one was at home! That would be the best thing for both parties. They could find each other another time.

Now to put on her wedding dress! If Tora could have seen it! Poor Tora! But such things will happen when one is not careful. Emilie asked her maid to take care that the folds hung properly over her tournure. At the same moment Fru Wingard came in with the bridal wreath.

Every one who came from the adjoining streets into the market-place, observed something red against the open door of the church, the outer one to the left. It was a red shirt, worn by a tall sailor. The church attendants tried to get him away, but in vain; all round were ladies who would willingly have occupied his place, but he answered that he had as good a right to stand there as any one else, which he undoubtedly had. He did not belong to the town, no one knew him; a tattoo mark on his hand showed that he had been at sea—indeed, he said so himself. He was in a timber ship now—she was a large vessel.

With this exception there were nothing but ladies, old and young, on the steps, down below, and in every direction, all who had not found room in the church. Every time the inner door opened, affording a glimpse of the interior, one saw, on both sides, right down to the door, nothing but ladies—nothing but bonnets, with flowers, feathers, and veils. A solitary uncovered masculine head in one of the rows of chairs showed up like a single late gooseberry or black currant on the branch in autumn. If the departed Herr Max could have looked up from the chancel where he lay, it would have been “a goodly sight” for his woman-loving eyes, especially as



the younger ones were all in the front places—they had been most eager in securing them.

Almost all the parasols which were to be seen on the market-place were either on the steps, or round about them, a many-coloured moving shield-like roof under which endless stories and laughter went on. Every one thought the donation to the Maternity Charity *too* felicitous. That Engel, who had so much tact, could—— But to be sure that was because Fru Wingard was the patroness—she had wheedled it out of him, the minx!

On either side of the steps, each one the centre of a group, stood those two sisters of doubtful character who had kept the club and the hotel until they had been obliged to relinquish them in favour of Engel's housekeeper. They least of all had reason to spare Engel or his guests for the day, the magnates of the coast towns.

Nearest to these stood another knot of women who had not had so much time to find places. There were few parasols here, but bonnets and aprons, and some of the younger ones even bareheaded. There was whispering, tittering, and giggling!

No solemnity, no gravity, no authority, not the least what is usual in a provincial town. Even where the darker groups of men were collected, there was no seriousness or "decorum," as the Town Bailiff would have said, and indeed as he did say when, at a quarter before four, he joined the guests, in full uniform, and with his wife on his arm. The guests indulged in witticisms and laughter, the result of which was not impressive; all the people looked at them with amused glances as though they were comrades. The town was unrecognisable. When two boys contrived to clamber on to the chimney of one of the houses opposite the church, all clapped their hands and shouted. This had just occurred as the Town Bailiff arrived. Amid the guests immediately following him came the organist, very drunk. He was a young Swabian, who three or four years ago came to the town in the course of a musical tour, and there remained. The then organist had recently died—the organ was a marvellous one; beside which there was excellent sea-bathing. He was a soft, fantastic, thoroughly musical man, who as a rule was every one's favourite, and who had more to do than he could manage, but who on a holiday "*Wenn Konstantinopel erobet*

*worden ischt*," as he expressed himself, got drunk. This occurred but seldom, but when it was the case he did anything which took his fancy.

This culminated when one day a home missionary was speaking from the chancel steps on the subject of sin, and the organist, noticing that every one was yawning, began to play the organ till it roared! It was pretended that the missionary made such very long pauses that the organist had been misled by the longest of them.

To-day he had conceived the happy idea of going gaily to Consul Engel, and asking him for some money for the organ, and he received a cheque on the spot. So "*Konstantinople*" had "*erobet worden*" again, and champagne corks flew! Who liked might drink with him. He came up, beaming with happiness and swinging his arms about. Every one laughed, and he laughed with them. He arrived just after the Town Bailiff and his wife. They looked as stiff as though the organist had yoked them and was driving them into the church. Great commotion was now caused by an attempt to drive a carriage through the crowd. Up to this time every one had come on foot. There was no room for carriages here, they cried, and turned sullen; the police had to interfere. In the carriage sat a pretty lively lady of uncertain age, by the side of a somewhat stout gentleman with a remarkably shaped head and a supercilious expression. Facing the lady sat an older man with a red face, heavy moustache and imperial, and wearing a number of orders; he talked incessantly, as though they were all three in a closed room where no one could see them. They did not belong to the town; no one knew them until the carriage-door was opened, and the man with the orders led the lady forward. Then the hotel-keeper's wife said that he was a Consul-General from Christiania; the lady was not his wife, but that of the gentleman who was walking beside them—Consul Garman, of the firm of Garman and Worse. Soon after these arrived two other strangers, Consuls Bernick and Riis. The first named invariably attended funerals with a stick in his hand; the other always wore his order of St. Olaf when he went to a ball. Several important magnates followed; some with their wives, some without—millionaires in the herring, timber, or ice trade. The monotony of the black coats was broken by the full uniform of the Sheriff—he was without his wife, and

in company with a gouty old General, a relation of Fürst. Besides these, there were Government officials and merchants mingled together, most of them with their wives, who hung on their husbands' arms like well-filled costly baskets; the husbands were quite eclipsed. Absolute silence gradually spread upwards from the lower end of the market-place, like oil over troubled waters. The bridegroom was alighting from his carriage, accompanied by his brother-in-law, Consul Wingaard. From another carriage descended two naval officers and two civilians, one of whom was Anton Dösen; these four joined the others.

All the special manœuvres which had brought about that Fürst should to-day approach the Cross Church through the crowd, admired or envied, accompanied or shunned, had been carried out by himself, and up to the present time he had earned the honoured reception of a victor. Still he did not advance with a victor's step—a child could see that at the first glance. He walked forward in the deadliest fear. Tora had never shown herself, had sent neither message nor letter. Neither she nor any of her friends had once been near Consul Engel's house. It was evident that she had not come to talk Emilie over, or to frighten her. What had she come for? What did Rendalen's threat mean? There was danger until he was inside the church; then the sanctity of the building, and the respect due to the old clergyman, must protect him. But here——! His eyes wandered up to the wooded slope above "The Estate." It was an involuntary action. It was not there, but here, that she might appear. She or others. She was not the only one.

His half-closed eyes searched about, his bronzed face was without movement—those strings which moved his lips must have broken! There was no smile now. His fair whiskers hung down and seemed to lengthen his face.

The gait of this dandy had an air of painful caution—each step might lead to disaster. If it did not fall on him, it might await her who would soon follow him. There were sparkling eyes all round and many sharp ones, but no one whom he feared. He was taller than the women; he could see for a good distance, and he looked from side to side—nothing!

He had just put his foot on the first step when the tall sailor stepped forward:

"Ane Marja sends you her compliments."

Those who stood nearer heard it; some who were further away saw the movement.

"Did he say something? What's he say?"

Sibilations whistled across; to those who were furthest away it sounded like es-s-s-s-s-s all round the church.

Fürst stood still: his eyes contracted as though fine dust had been thrown into his face; his gloved hand sought for his handkerchief, from which scent was wafted; he blew his nose, and walked on, his friends following him. Within it seemed dark after the bright sunshine outside, but in the darkness were eyes, women's eyes!

Here sat Tora's friends. He knew every one in the town by sight, and picked them out one by one. They sat quite in front, excited, restless, threatening. There must be something after all. The great church bell began to ring at that moment, and the bride's carriage was seen at the end of the market-place. What would happen now?

Nora, Tinka, and Anna Rogne were on Fürst's left as he walked up to the chancel. He glanced involuntarily to the opposite side; the first seat was vacant. Every one in the chancel rose as the bridegroom appeared.

There was a stir outside, not merely because the bride's carriage had arrived followed by those of the bridesmaids and Fru Wingaard, but because the coachman in grey livery wanted to drive up to the church door, which seemed impossible. Those in front pressed back to make room, but those behind declined to be pushed against, and exerted their strength, till several people were forced up against the carriage windows. Shrieks, angry words, and orders ensued, and alarm inside the carriages. Engel put his head out of the window, but no one listened to him, and he got out of the carriage. The police were at hand, and eagerly cleared a way for the wealthy magnate, while the bride alighted, as did the bridesmaids; they arranged themselves and walked forward, not where the others had passed; the crowd made way for them in all directions.

Her red-gold hair crowned with myrtle, the bride resembled the most exquisite work of an English Academician. The lines of her face were regular and of an English type, the colouring soft, the skin very white; the shoulders rather sloping, beautiful—the figure that of a soft delicate young girl.

She walked forward with her head bent, not looking at any one, her hand resting lightly on her father's arm; just below the level of his order of St. Olaf could be seen her diamond ornament, though only by those just before or just above them. An old-fashioned brooch, a valuable one, which was recognised as having been a favourite of her mother, secured the flowers in front of her dress. A puff of wind raised her veil just as they came up the steps; it streamed out into the face of the sailor, but did not touch it; a delicate perfume was spread in all directions. How relieved Engel felt as he stood inside the door! That had been the worst journey he had ever made in his life. Still he had not hurried; unobtrusive, quiet, benign, he had walked forward; he kept his eyes fixed on one point—was that the needle's eye which must be passed through?

His handsome regular features looked as though they had never been disturbed by any idea inconsistent with honourable habits, or the good counsel of elders and superiors—nay, as though he had never had knowledge of such things. His had always been a God-fearing house; three generations had endowed charities. The very perfume which now hung round them might well have come from Palestine.

And after all there had been no danger. "We are in church now." The organ pealed under the powerful touch of the drunken Swabian; its full accords blended with Engel's thoughts, and seemed to restore him to himself.

No delight can compare with that of an evenly balanced nature, which, having believed itself in danger, discovers that that danger has been a delusion. This feeling of delight does not spring violently into being, it does not throb, but spreads through the whole man with a soft perfect sense of enjoyment. It resembles the delight of recovery, of a good digestion, the smiling view, the delightful odour of some coveted object to which he may now draw near. He raised his face, bearing its best expression, towards the pulpit, calmly receiving all the glances which were directed towards him. He suspected that he was envied, and that tickled him.

What a future lay before them! Just then the bride's hand trembled; he withdrew his eyes quickly from the pulpit. Milla was deadly white, and could not, or would not advance. What was it?

Nora, Tinka, Anna Rogne, and several others were sitting quite in front, just where they must pass. Could there be anything terrifying in that? Every face bore an expression of mingled excitement and mischievous delight, all, all of them, in whatever direction he looked; it infected him as well. What was it? Involuntarily his eyes sought the chancel—if they were but there! There they would be in peace. But all in the chancel were on their feet; they stood amazed, staring down into the body of the church, not to his side, but to the opposite one. At the same moment his daughter gave a sharp cry and staggered backwards, dragging him with her.

Into the pew furthest from them on the right, through the vestry, and therefore from across the chancel, came Pastor Vangen; after him, Tora Holm, with something in her arms; then Miss Hall, then Rendalen. In this order they were just seating themselves as the bridal procession entered the door.

Tora had a double black veil over her face and over what she held in her arms, and this had been securely fastened so that it was only when Miss Hall had helped her that she was able to turn with her face uncovered, and with her child in her arms, towards her who was now advancing.

A storm of anger, reprobation, threats seemed to rise to the very roof, the excitement mingling with the roll of the organ. Milla was almost dragged forward. She came into the chancel little more than a white silk dress among all the other dresses.

A rustle, a stir! Heads, hands, eyes, bouquets seemed to whirl before her, so that she could not extricate herself, nor find her own seat, her own bouquet, her own handkerchief. Every one crowded round with offers of help, with Eau de Cologne, and general disturbance. The last to come was the big red-faced man with the large moustache and the decorations; he tried to force her own bouquet on her, of which she could not endure the scent. When at last she was free and could draw a breath, she burst into tears. She drew her veil forward. Milla pitied herself so: what a dreadful thing it was that they had done; she felt furious, perfectly furious.

Consul Engel received her first glance. It came on him, following all that he had already gone through, like the last

dram which deprives a man of consciousness. He began to wonder with a strange delirious feeling why his trousers felt so thin. Was it really so?

The elegant Fürst sat beside him, holding his hat first in one hand, then in the other, and crossing and uncrossing his legs. It was on account of *him* that all this had happened, and the budding politician was not yet sufficiently accomplished to be able to sit still while he was flayed, cut up, and put in the pot.

Dösen, who was close behind him, pulled the ends of his fair moustache with his white-gloved hands—now left, now right—harder, and harder, and harder. He was marvellously industrious over it. The people in the body of the church saw this white hand moving about under his nose, and thought that he was playing some trick, or making signs to some one, but they could not find out to whom. The grand folk felt the embarrassment of the situation to be most distressing, but, all the same, they wanted to get a look at the woman with the child—she was so devilish handsome, so foreign-looking. They strained their necks, they craned forward; Consul Bernick himself made his neck as long and distorted as that of a cockerel when it is learning to crow.

To the rest of these mishaps was added the Dean's non-appearance. The vergers went in and out, in and out, with all the solemnity of intense stupidity.

The organist's playing showed signs of impatience.

It seemed to him that it was rather long before Dean Green came and he would be able to begin the hymn. He had exhausted the pompous style long ago; he now turned to the sentimental, its direct opposite—from the clear notes of the shepherd's pipe to the most impossible chirping of a chicken. His fancy indubitably wandered among all the little ones who were to spring from this marriage; he chased them with his fingers, saying hush, hush, to them in the treble.

At last Engel had recovered himself so far that he began to realise the difference between the delicate and the coarse, between well-bred and ill-bred individuals; to the latter he knew that nothing was so delightful as scandal, but this was something altogether unheard of. It needed a Kurt to have thought of this, to have created such a maddening scene. His handkerchief was wet already, his

white gloves were almost grey. As he fanned himself and wiped away the perspiration, he glanced anxiously at Milla. She hated him! He prayed to God. Yes, Consul Emil Engel prayed fervently to God that their sins might not be visited upon this poor innocent girl! They had deceived her, truly, but with the best intentions in the world. God knew how true this was. But who could have anticipated that so mad a thing should have been attempted as to dishonour the sacred edifice?

Engel did not swear as a rule, he was too refined a man for that, but almost simultaneously with his heartfelt communion with God, he desired with his whole heart that the devil might take the lot of them.

He had recourse to his wet handkerchief again. At the same time the thought was in Milla's mind, "Shall I go?"

Engel saw it in her eyes, in the way she moved on her chair. Fürst saw it also. Both felt it like a million electric shocks; but they could not give up their last hope that Milla was too well-bred to increase the scandal. Engel felt that, even if she remained, he should be, from this time forward, a broken, discredited man; Fürst felt that if only Milla would go with him before the altar, a career would still be open to him.

But still the Dean did not come! All thoughts centred on this; it became intensely painful. All eyes were fixed on the vestry door. Was he ill, or feigning to be so, so as not to come. Where was the deacon, then? Make him come! Why did not Karl Vangen move? The women in the chancel who had not got over the first fright (there were some who had been obliged to grasp the seats of their chairs to prevent themselves from trembling) were now made really ill by this fresh strain; several began to cry. "Yes," thought Milla; "I am to be pitied, dreadfully to be pitied! Oh, if mother had lived!" And she cried bitterly. Every one had conspired against her, who had done nothing. Would old Green now let her sit there so miserably on the stool of repentance before all these horrid, horrid people!

She thus lost sight of the first and important question, and was so tossed about by the feeling of desolation that, when the Dean did at length appear, she felt it consolation, a reward from Heaven.



But if she had not, even for a moment, got sufficiently away from herself to feel why this had been done, those had, who sat below the chancel. Not only those who were in the secret, who were few in number, not only their sympathisers who were numerous ; no, every woman felt that it would be shocking, if, after what had occurred, Milla could or would go on. Even if she had been dragged up there—why did she not rise, why did she not leave them ? They expected her to do so from one moment to another, but Milla remained seated. Could such a thing be possible, after such a strong appeal to her conscience ? Every good woman, who is unfettered, involuntarily takes the part of the weak, of the one who has been wronged. The minds of those in the church were agitated like the waves of the sea. The stir became greater and greater. Was it credible that she would go to the altar with the wretch ? Shame on those around her who could countenance such a thing. Every one stared at the altar. Was not old Green coming ? He must have had scruples at the last moment about giving them the blessing of the Church. Karl Vangen would never have done so. He was with her who was betrayed and deceived. He was so simple-minded that he believed that the Church's place was there. The grateful glances which his broad face attracted during these few moments would have gilded the vaulted roofs of several churches, or thousands of hymn-books and Bibles. At length they saw by the stir in the chancel that old Green had come at last. Really and truly !

Very slowly and feebly he came, very feeble indeed he looked. "A thorough ecclesiastical compromise," it was whispered about. Just as he reached the altar, the hymn began. All those in the chancel joined in it. In their zeal, their relief, their gratitude to Providence, they all sang ; the bridegroom, Engel, the General and the Consul-General, Bernick, Dösen, Riis, the celebrities, the Sheriff, all sang of the first bride who was brought by God himself to the first bridegroom. Not one of them believed it, but they sang so that it was a sin that the organ overpowered them, for such singing of hymns ought to be heard.

Their wives' trebles chimed in ; they were so startled that they could not find the hymn, but they all knew it by heart. The one who was the quickest to join in, and who sang the loudest in praise of marriage, was Fru Garman.

Except these and the clerk, no one in the whole church joined in the singing. The stir became so great and so general that a number could not remain sitting, they stood up; those behind them wanted to see, and stood up also. But Tora rose before any one of them. What those around her had felt, and were feeling with all its violence, was as nothing to what she experienced, for when deeply moved she showed herself her mother's daughter. The journey here had worked her up to a state of excitement, which her constitution could hardly bear.

If for no other reason, still for her own sake, Milla must be prevented from marrying the wretch. For this it was necessary that Tora should show herself, she and her child; everything else might fail, but this would force Milla to pause—she knew her!

This could only be done if Tora had the will and the courage for it. And she had, for her friends had the will and courage to be with her. It did not merely concern herself. It concerned the school, Milla, a great cause; it concerned thousands!

No one, least of all herself, had had the slightest doubt but that to stand up with her child in her arms before the bride, would be sufficient. From the moment that Milla had burst into tears in the chancel, but still remained in her place, until now, when old Green had come, Tora's excitement had increased to such an extent that those nearest to her were alarmed; it could be observed as well from the seat opposite. They knew now that something must be done, upon which neither they nor she had reckoned, before their object could be attained. Tora was Tora, and would be true to herself.

Fürst was already at the altar, accompanied by Consul Wingaard; Engel had walked carefully across the carpet to lead his daughter forward. She rose and allowed the bridesmaids to arrange her train and veil—when Tora sprang forward from her seat.

Every one in the chancel was looking at the bride, who gave her hand to her father and turned with him towards the altar. They did not see Tora come up the steps. There was a sound behind them like the breaking of a wave, and at the same moment something black passed quickly by. The ladies shrieked, the gentlemen grew rigid with dismay.

Those at the altar turned round ; Engel staggered backwards ; Tora stood between him and his daughter.

"Do you wish me to lay the child down before you, Milla? Will you have it to kneel on?"

"No! no!" cried Milla in horror. She turned, and with her hands before her she flew from the chancel, her veil streaming behind her.

Every one had risen. Tora had hastened at once to the vestry—she felt that now her strength was exhausted—Miss Hall followed her there.

But when Milla had left the chancel, she did not know where to fly to ; some one ought to come to her, to be with her—her womanly instinct told her that. She turned and looked round bewildered. The vestry door was opened, a harsh cry was heard from it for just so long as was needed for the opening and shutting of a door ; but it was enough. Milla began to cry too. An arm was put round her waist, she was led from the church ; it was Nora. From the moment that Milla had yielded, all resentment was over, all anger vanished. Indeed, it was so with most of them. Rendalen was quickly at her side, and then went on before them to make way.

The organist, who had not seen what had gone before, but who, after the first hymn, had expected to hear the words of the service, rose when the movement became general. What was it? He saw the bride out in the aisle, the others still in the chancel, the whole congregation standing up. "*Aber das war kurios! Wird's nichts daraus? Ho—ho! Ich hab' meine zwei tausend!*"

And he began to play the organ. They tried to stop him, but he answered, "What haf they don with the brite? The music shall do her goot."

Hardly had the bellringers heard the organ before they thought, "Now they are married," and began to ring the bells. Hardly had those on board the saluting vessel heard the bells before the guns began to thunder. They were to continue firing until the bride's carriage drew up at the door of the house, and as they could not see this from the ship, a signal was to be made to them. In the general confusion this was forgotten, so on they went—bang, bang, bang! It seemed to them at last that they had fired a great many rounds, but that was other people's affair, so they thundered away as long as they had any powder ; for they also had been drinking considerably.

All this caused great amusement. The affair changed from the sublime to the ridiculous. First among the crowd who left the church amid the pealing of the organ, the clash of the bells, the thunder of the cannon; their laughter was taken up in increasing measure by those in the market-place, and from there it spread over the whole town. In the memory of man there had not been so much laughter at one time as now resounded from the river banks to the most remote houses on the mountain, or out on the Point. The country people went laughing home amid the roar of the cannon, and wherever they came there was laughter.

A gala day in town and harbour. Thunder of cannon and flutter of flags, flags and cannon—and laughter!

At first the bridal party looked at each other with horror; by ones and twos they made their way out of the church, but the laughter outside was infectious; when they got home and read the *Spectator*, they laughed too.

The Town Bailiff himself laughed!

Up the avenue walked Nora and Rendalen. The cannon thundered, and they turned round and looked at the flags flying in the town and in the harbour—and laughed. Karl Vangen hurried past them on his long legs; Tora was at Niels Hansen's. She was terribly exhausted, but calm; he was going to fetch the carriage—and off he went. No less than fifteen girls passed them at once, going up to Fru Rendalen; another large group was following them. They did not walk, they raced, and were quickly past.

A little later Fru Rendalen came out on to the steps to meet her son and Nora: they were just the opposite of every one else; they stopped every moment. Now, just when she wanted them so much. How could they forget her?

All at once she pulled off her spectacles and wiped them. Then put them on slowly.

Rendalen said, as he walked along the avenue, that there had been a great deal which was one-sided and obscure, too much of a fixed idea in his first lecture, and that there was a great deal in his development as well, which was but half accomplished. Still, "life is a school, and first and foremost concerns schoolmasters." He did not say this in so many words, he had not the least need for anything so stiff and cold. To speak the plain truth, while they involuntarily flew the flags down below for the success of his life's aim, he

walked along here and paid his court—to her with the “flickering” hair. It seemed to her that she was quite unworthy, and she brushed a swarm of flies from her eyes. But it was so absolutely impossible not to wish, and so——

They agreed about many, many, many things. The first was that if one has confidence in a work, that confidence helps in its development; the second was, that when there are two it goes on twice as quickly, or it may be that the last was the first, and the first the last. They really were not accountable.

But fifteen girls were up on the tower at once; they wanted to hoist one flag to-day which would tell no lie, and also for a reason which was without deception. They called down to ask leave; Rendalen was at the foot of the steps, he laughed up to them. Nora had sprung away from him—up the steps to Fru Rendalen. She pressed closely, oh, so closely, to her—apparently to put her spectacles on better.

“No, no,” called Rendalen up to the girls on the tower; “not to-day—for Milla’s sake, but we will do so very soon.”

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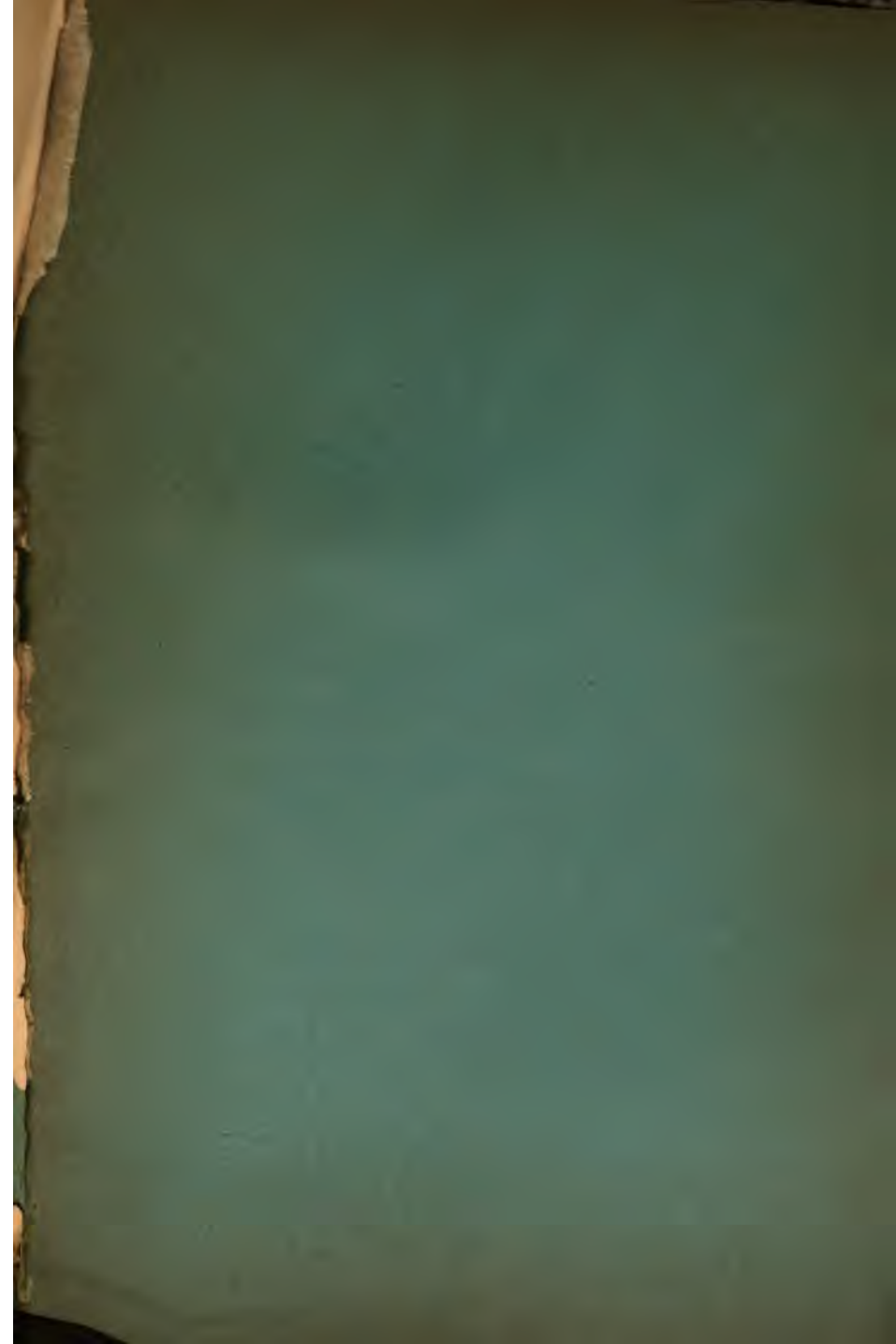
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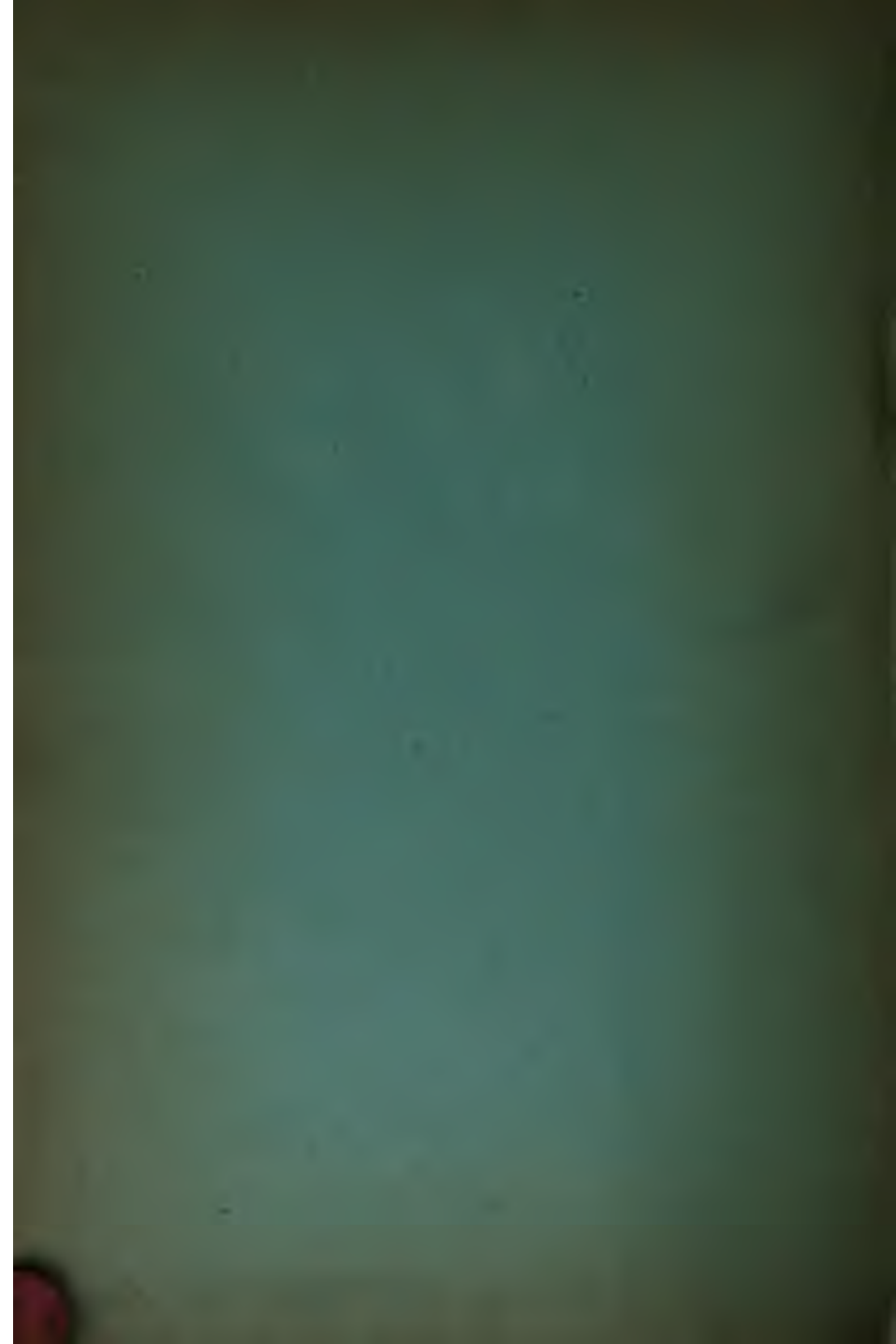
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